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**ELEMENTS**  
**OF**  
**ENGLISH COMPOSITION.**



THE  
ELEMENTS  
OF  
ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

BY  
DAVID IRVING, LL. D.

THE ELEVENTH EDITION.



EDINBURGH:  
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# PREFACE

• TO

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

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THE present work, which I have now endeavoured to render less objectionable, is obviously destined for the use of those whose critical studies are yet in their commencement. To younger readers, and to such as have not access to more extended and elaborate performances, it may perhaps convey some useful instruction : it is not calculated, nor is it intended, for those who have already made any considerable progress in such enquiries. Some compendious treatise of this nature seemed to be wanting ; and the author's attempt to supply the deficiency, has been attended with a degree of encouragement which has surprized no person more than himself.

Although it was my principal object to treat of prose composition, a few observations on poetry are occasionally introduced. The remarks on the various modifications of figurative language, are equally applicable to prose and to poetry; but the poets have supplied the most copious and striking illustrations.

As the rules of criticism are more successfully inculcated by particular examples than by general precepts, I have endeavoured to illustrate every branch of the subject by apposite quotations, chiefly from writers of acknowledged reputation. In many instances this was an easy task; but in the classification of the different characters of style, it was attended with more difficulty and hazard. In estimating the merits and defects of any composition, there is much room for variety and opposition of opinion; nor is it to be expected that different individuals will always be disposed to regard the same passages as nervous, elegant, or graceful. It is however of importance for the student to become acquainted with the characteristic manner of the most eminent writers; and the various examples which I have produced, if they should fail in their primary design, may at least be rendered conducive to this subordinate purpose. To exhibit the progressive changes or improvements of English style, I have subjoined a long series of quotations from distinguished authors, arranged in chronological order.

The selection commences about the period when that of Dr. Johnson closes, and it gradually descends to our own time, without however including the name of any living writer.

It was my first wish and intention to prepare a work which might have some claim to be considered as original; but I speedily discovered that I should best consult, if not my own reputation, at least the advantage of the reader, if I assumed the more humble character of a compiler. I have accordingly attempted to avail myself of the previous labours of many different authors, distinguished for their learning or judgment. For the more valuable instruction contained in this volume, the reader is in a great measure indebted to Bishop Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar, Dr. Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, Dr. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism, and Mr. Melmoth's Letters. To other occasional sources of information I have been careful to make the proper references; but to these writers my obligations have been so numerous, that I forbore to quote them in the usual form; "not that I might appropriate their labours, or usurp their honours, but that I might spare a perpetual repetition by one general acknowledgment."

In the present impression, much has been retrenched, and more added. In the former editions, which amount to a considerable number, I had no opportunity of correcting the press: and the errors

of the printer, as generally happens in such cases, were gradually multiplied ; many passages were rendered ungrammatical, and some nearly unintelligible. All these blemishes I have been anxious to remove ; and I have bestowed a very considerable portion of labour in the attempt to improve the general texture of the work.

EDINBURGH,  
18 *October* 1828.

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THE  
ELEMENTS  
OF  
ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

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CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

SOME philosophers, supposing that mankind did not receive the gift of language from the divine author of their being, have been pleased to explain the process by which they must have fabricated a language for themselves; but if mankind had been sent into the world without the principal organ of speech, I could almost as easily have believed them capable of inventing tongues. In the opinion of other writers, eminent for their learning, the true system of etymology consists in tracing the words of every language to one primitive speech. The researches of modern philologists have ascertained the radical affinities of many languages, which were formerly believed to have no connexion with each other; and there is every reason to anticipate that the further progress of such re-

ments of the same age. But although we are deprived of the benefit of his observations, we are happily in possession of an illustrious instance of their effects; and his own commentaries will ever remain as the brightest exemplar, not only of true generalship, but also of fine writing. He published them indeed only as materials for the use of those who might be disposed to enlarge upon that remarkable period of the Roman history; yet the purity and gracefulness of his style are such, that no judicious writer afterwards dared to attempt the same subject. Cicero frequently mentions it as a very high encomium, that the celebrated Roman orators possessed the elegance of their native language: he introduces Brutus declaring that he should prefer the honour of being esteemed the great master and improver of Roman eloquence, even to the glory of many triumphs.

As beauty of composition tends to heighten the native charms of truth, it ought never to be regarded as an object of small importance. But it may be alleged that truth requires not the foreign aid of ornament. It is not indeed necessary that she should be exhibited in a glaring habit; but she ought certainly to be clothed with decency and propriety. A beautiful woman in careless and sordid apparel, can never appear to great advantage.

To some of the English philosophers, science has many important obligations; but would those great authors have diminished the utility of their literary labours by employing more smooth and polished language? Never indeed does the force of reason more effectually subdue the human mind, than when she is supported by the powerful assistance of manly elo-

quence; as, on the contrary, the most legitimate arguments may be rendered unavailing by being attended with a feeble and unanimated expression. There is as much difference between comprehending a thought clothed in the language of Cicero, and that of an ordinary writer, as there is between viewing an object by the light of the sun and by the light of a taper.

Malebranche has assuredly fallen into a very strange conceit when he insinuates, that the pleasure arising from the perusal of a beautiful composition is of a criminal nature, and has its source in the weakness and effeminacy of the human mind. That man must possess a very uncommon severity of temper, who can find any thing to condemn in the practice of embellishing truth with additional charms, and winning the heart by captivating the ear; in uniting roses with the thorns of science, and joining pleasure with instruction. The mind is delighted with a fine style, upon the same principle that it prefers regularity to confusion, and beauty to deformity. A taste for the beauties of composition is so far from being a mark of any depravity of our nature, that I should rather be inclined to consider it as an evidence of the moral rectitude of our mental constitution, since it furnishes a direct proof that we retain some relish of order and harmony.

Few objects have ever appeared of greater importance to wise men, than to tincture the young and susceptible mind with an early relish for the pleasures of taste. Easy in general is the transition from the pursuit of such pleasures to the discharge of the higher and more important duties of human life; and sanguine hopes may commonly be entertained of the

pupil who has evinced this liberal and elegant turn of mind. It is favourable to the growth of many virtues; whereas to be devoid of taste for the fine arts, is justly regarded as an unpromising symptom in youth, and raises suspicions of their being prone to low gratifications, or destined to drudge in the more vulgar and illiberal pursuits of life. There are few good dispositions of any kind with which the improvement of this faculty is not in some degree connected. A cultivated taste increases sensibility to all the tender and humane passions, by giving them frequent exercise; while, on the other hand, it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions, by exciting in us a lively sense of decorum.

From these observations it will appear that the charge of Malebranche is not only ill founded, but absolutely ridiculous. One would however be apt to suspect that certain writers among us had considered the subject in the same gloomy point of view; or at least that they had studiously avoided every refinement in style, as unbecoming a lover of truth and wisdom. Their sentiments are debased by the lowest expressions; they seem condemned to the curse of creeping upon the ground all the days of their life.

But there is another extreme, which ought also to be carefully avoided. Language may be too pompous, as well as too mean. Some authors mistake pomp for dignity; and with the view of raising their expressions above vulgar language, elevate them above common apprehension. They seem to consider it as a mark of their genius, that it requires some sagacity to discover their meaning; but when their meaning is discovered, it seldom repays the labour of the search.



## CHAP. II.

## OF PURITY OF STYLE.

STYLE has been defined to be the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions through the medium of language. It differs from mere language or words. Though the words which an author employs be unexceptionable, yet his style may be chargeable with great faults; it may be dry, stiff, feeble, affected. The style of an author is always intimately connected with his manner of thinking: it is a picture of the ideas which arise in his mind, and of the manner in which they arise. Hence the difficulty of drawing an exact line of separation between the style and the sentiment.

All that can be required of language is to convey our ideas clearly to the mind of others, and, at the same time, to clothe them in an advantageous dress. The two general heads of perspicuity and ornament, therefore, comprehend all the qualities of a good style. Perspicuity demands our chief care; for, without this quality, the richest ornaments of language only glimmer through the dark, and puzzle, instead of pleasing, the reader. An author's meaning ought always to be obvious even to the most careless and inattentive reader, so that it may strike his mind, as the light of the sun strikes our eyes. We must study, not only that every reader may understand us, but that it shall be impossible

for him not to understand us. If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pause, and to read over his sentences a second time, in order to comprehend them fully, he will not long continue to please. Mankind are generally too indolent to relish so much labour: they may pretend to admire the author's depth, after they have discovered his meaning; but they will seldom be inclined to bestow upon his work a second perusal.

In treating of perspicuity of style, it will be proper, in the first place, to direct our attention to single words and phrases, and afterwards to the construction of sentences.

Perspicuity, considered with respect to words and phrases, requires the qualities of purity, propriety, and precision. Of these, the first two are often confounded with each other, and indeed they are very nearly allied: a distinction however obtains between them. Purity of style consists in the use of such words, and such constructions as belong to the idiom of the language which we use; in opposition to words and phrases which are imported from other languages, or which are obsolete, or new-coined, or used without proper authority. Propriety of style consists in the selection of such words, as the best and most established usage has appropriated to those ideas which we employ them to express. It implies the correct and happy application of them, according to that usage, in opposition to vulgarisms, or low expressions, and to words and phrases which would be less significant of the ideas which we intend to convey. Style may be pure, that is, it may be strictly English, without Scotisms or Gallicisms, or un-



grammatical or unwarranted expressions of any kind, and may nevertheless be deficient in propriety. The words may be unskillfully chosen, not adapted to the subject, nor fully expressive of the author's sentiments ; he may have taken his words and phrases from the general mass of the English language, but his selection may happen to be injudicious.

Purity may justly be denominated grammatical truth. It consists in the conformity of the expression to the sentiment which the writer intends to convey ; as moral truth consists in the conformity of the sentiment intended to be conveyed, to the sentiment actually entertained ; and logical truth in the conformity of the sentiment to the nature of things. The opposite to logical truth is error ; to moral truth a lie ; to grammatical truth a solecism.

The only standard by which the conformity implied in grammatical truth must be ascertained in every language, is the authorized, national, and present use of that language.

Grammatical errors, foreign idioms, and obsolete or new-coined words, were mentioned as inconsistent with purity of style. It will not be improper to collect a few hints concerning each of these faults.

### I. GRAMMATICAL ERRORS.

It is not in consequence of any peculiar irregularity or difficulty inherent in the English language, that the general practice, both of speaking and writing it, is chargeable with inaccuracy. That inaccuracy rather proceeds from its simplicity and facility ; circumstances which are apt to persuade us that a

grammatical study of our native tongue is altogether superfluous.\* Were the language less easy and simple, we should find ourselves under the necessity of studying it with greater care and attention. But we commonly take for granted, that we possess a competent knowledge of it, and are able on any occasion to apply our knowledge to practice. A faculty, solely acquired by use, conducted by habit, and tried by the ear, carries us on without the labour of reflection: we meet with no obstacles in our progress, or we do not perceive them; we find ourselves able to proceed without rules, and we never suspect that they may be of any use. A grammatical study of our own language forms no part of the ordinary course of instruction, and we seldom apply to it of our own accord. This however is a deficiency which no other advantages can supply: much practice in the polite world, and a general acquaintance with the best authors, must undoubtedly be considered as excellent helps; but even these will hardly be sufficient. A critical knowledge of ancient languages, and an intimate acquaintance with ancient authors, will be found still less adequate to that purpose: Dr. Bent-

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\* "Another," observes Sir Philip Sidney, "will say, it wanteth grammer. Nay truly, it hath that prayse, that it wanteth not grammer; for grammer it might haue, but it needes it not, being so easie of it selfe, and so voyd of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moodes, and tenses, which I thinke was a peece of the tower of Babilons curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother tongue. But for the vttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the minde, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world." (*Apologie for Poetrie*, sig. L. Lond. 1595, 4to.)

ley, the greatest critic and most able grammarian of the age in which he lived, was notably deficient in the niceties of his mother tongue.\*

Grammatical errors are so plentifully scattered over the pages of our eminent writers, that it will be no difficult task to select a sufficient number of examples.

### 1. *Grammatical Errors in the Use of Pronouns.*

We contributed a third more than the Dutch, who were obliged to the same proportion more than *us*.—*Swift's Conduct of the Allies*.

King Charles, and more than *him*, the duke, and the popish faction, were at liberty to form new schemes.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties*.

Phalaris, who was so much older than *her*.—*Bentley's Dissertation on Phalaris*.

The drift of all his sermons was, to prepare the Jews for the reception of a prophet, mightier than *him*, and whose shoes he was not worthy to bear.—*Atterbury's Sermons*.

If the king gives us leave, you or I may as lawfully preach as *them* that do.—*Hobbes's History of Civil Wars*.

In all these examples, the nominative case of the pronouns ought to have been used. This will more plainly appear from the following resolution of the first illustration: "We contributed a third more

---

\* "Erat Bentleius vir infinitæ doctrinæ, acutissimi sensus, acerrimi iudicii. Et his tribus rebus omnis laus et virtus continetur critici." (Hermanni Opuscula, vol. ii. p. 264. Lipsiæ, 1827-39, 7 tom. 8vo.) As a classical critic, this is his character drawn by a most competent judge. As an English critic, his character may be learned from Bishop Pearce's "Review of the Text of Milton's Paradise Lost: in which the chief of Dr. Bentley's Emendations are consider'd." Lond. 1733, 8vo.

than the Dutch, who were obliged to the same proportion more than *we* were obliged to."

The Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, the Alemanni, wasted each other's strength, and whosoever vanquished, *they* vanquished the enemies of Rome.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

Cæsar having in this manner made an example which he supposed was to overawe all the nations of that neighbourhood, *he* withdrew with his army.—*Ferguson's Hist. of the Roman Republic.*

Who is the poet but lately arrived in Elysium, whom I saw Spenser lead in, and present *him* to Virgil?—*Lyttelton's Dialogues of the Dead.*

Here the pronouns *they*, *he*, and *him*, are redundant. In the latter example, the accusative *whom* is understood before the verb *present*: "whom I saw Spenser lead in, and *whom* I saw Spenser present to Virgil."

We are alone; here's none but *thee* and I.—*Shakspeare.*

Instead of *thee* it should be *thou*.

For ever in this humble cell,  
Let *thee* and *I*, my fair one, dwell.—*Prior.*

The construction requires *me* instead of *I*.

He, *whom* ye pretend reigns in heaven, is so far from protecting the miserable sons of men, that he perpetually delights to blast the sweetest flowerets in the garden of Hope.—*Hawkesworth's Adventurer.*

It ought to be *who*, the nominative case to *reigns*, not *whom*, as if it were the accusative or objective case governed by *pretend*.

Whom do men say that I am?—*St. Matthew.*

Whom think ye that I am?—*Acts of the Apostles.*

In both these passages it ought to be *who*; which is not governed by the verb *say* or *think*, but by the verb *am*.

These feasts were celebrated to the honour of Osiris, *whom* the Grecians called Dionysius, and *is* the same with Bacchus.—*Swift on the Mechan. Oper. of the Spirit.*

Here the relative pronoun of the accusative case must be understood as the nominative to the verb *is*. The passage ought to have stood thus: "These feasts were celebrated to the honour of Osiris, whom the Grecians called Dionysius, and *who* is the same with Bacchus."

*Who* should I meet at the coffee-house t'other night, but my old friend?—*Steele, Spectator.*

It is another pattern of this answerer's fair dealing, to give us hints that the author is dead, and yet to lay the suspicion upon somebody, I know not *who*, in the country.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

My son is going to be married to I don't know *who*.—*Goldsmith's Good-natured Man.*

Here the construction requires *whom*.

*Ye*, which is the nominative or vocative plural of the pronoun *thou*, some writers have inaccurately used as the accusative plural.

His wrath, which one day will destroy *ye* both.—*Milton.*

The more shame for *ye*; holy men I thought *ye*.—*Shakspeare.*

I feel the gales that from *ye* blow.—*Gray.*

But tyrants dread *ye*, lest your just decree

Transfer the power and set the people free.—*Prior.*

This mode of expression may perhaps be allowed in the comic and burlesque style, which often imitates a vulgar and incorrect pronunciation; but in the serious and solemn style, no authority is sufficient to justify so manifest a solecism.

This by the calumniators of Epicurus *his* philosophy was objected as one of the most scandalous of all their sayings.—*Cowley's Essays.*

I heard it first observed by an ingenious and learned old gentle-

man lately deceased, that many of Mr. Hobbes *his* seeming new opinions are gathered from those which Sextus Empiricus exposed.—*Dryden's Life of Plutarch.*

My paper is Ulysses *his* bow, in which every man of wit or learning may try his strength.—*Addison, Guardian.*

The pronoun *his* is here employed to denote the possessive case of the noun which it accompanies. The writers have erroneously imagined that the *'s* which generally marks this case, is a contraction of the possessive pronoun; whereas it is only a contraction of the Anglo-Saxon genitive termination *es*.\*

## 2. *Grammatical Errors in the Use of Verbs.*

And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her youngest son.—*Genesis.*

The number of the names together *were* about an hundred and twenty.—*Acts of the Apostles.*

If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, *sanctifieth* to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ - - - purge your conscience from dead works!—*St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.*

I have considered *what have* been said on both sides of the controversy.—*Tillotson's Sermons.*

One would think there *was* more *sophists* than one had a finger in this volume of letters.—*Bentley's Dissert. on Socrates's Epistles.*

There's *two or three* of us have seen strange sights.—*Shakspeare.*

The undisciplined fury and unarmed courage of the Pisidians *was* unable to check the progress of Alexander.—*Gillies's Hist. of Greece.*

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\* See Dr. Bosworth's Elements of Anglo-Saxon Grammar, p. 84. Lond. 1823, 8vo.—Thus in German: *ein Mann*, a man, *eines Mannes*, of a man. Some of the older writers have occasionally employed the word *his* in a manner extremely awkward. The following passage occurs in Smith's translation of Daillé's *Treatise concerning the right Use of the Fathers*, p. 96. "Which hath given occasion to some of the more modern authors, who have written since Gennadius his time, to think that this epistle was not truly Pope Julius *his*."



These instances require no elucidation: the reader will easily perceive where the error lies.

Knowing that *you was* my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death.—*Addison, Spectator.*

I am just now as well as when *you was* here.—*Pope's Letters.*

Desire this passionate lover to give you a character of his mistress, he will tell you that he is at a loss for words to describe her charms, and will ask you seriously, if ever *you was* acquainted with a goddess or an angel.—*Hume's Essays.*

As the word *you* is confessedly plural, its correspondent verb, agreeably to the analogy of all languages, ought also to be plural, whether the discourse be addressed to a single person or to more than one. Many other writers of reputation have however used the ungrammatical expression *you was*. But if the singular were at all admissible after *you*, there would still be a violation of grammar in *was*, which is confined to the first and third persons; the second being *wast*.

Thou hangman, thou temple-robber, thou clod of earth, from what brothel *did thou come up* in patins, muff'd up, with thy breath smelling of the stews?—*Arbuthnot on the Scolding of the Ancients.*

*Thou great First Cause, least understood,*

*Who all my sense confin'd*

*To know but this, that thou art good,*

*And that myself am blind;*

*Yet gave me, in this dark estate,*

*To see the good from ill;*

*And, binding Nature fast in fate,*

*Left free the human will.—Pope.*

*Nor thou, Lord Arthur, shalt escape;*

*To thee I often call'd in vain,*

*Against that assassin in crape;*

*Yet thou could'st tamely see me slain;*

*Nor, when I felt the dreadful blow,*

*Or chid the dean, or pinch'd his spouse.—Swift.*



To correspond with the pronoun *thou*, all these verbs ought to have been in the second person singular, instead of which, they are in the second person plural, as if they corresponded with the pronoun *you*. Writers generally have recourse to this mode of expression, that they may avoid harsh terminations.—The distinct forms of *thou* and *you* are often used promiscuously :

The confession is ingenuous, and I hope more from *thee* now, than I could if *you* had promised.—*Arbuthnot's Notes and Memorandums*.

*Thy* own words have convinced me (stand a little more out of the sun, if *you* please) that *thou* hast not the least idea of true honour.—*Fielding's Dialogue between Alexander and Diogenes*.

Base ungrateful boy! miserable as I am, yet I cannot cease to love *thee*. My love even now speaks in my resentment. I am still *your* father, nor can *your* usage form my heart anew.—*Goldsmith's Essays*.

Though the ministers of a tyrant's wrath, to *thee* they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which *you* unjustly imposed upon them.—*Orford's Castle of Otranto*.

This is not contrary to the rules of English grammar, but it is certainly inelegant and improper.

But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian, require a more sober and accurate language.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire*.

Magnus, with four thousand of his supposed accomplices, were put to death.—*Ibid*.

Those whom the splendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summit of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy in those who look up to them from a lower station.—*Johnson's Life of Savage*.

He knows not what spleen, languor, or listlessness, are.—*Blair's Sermons*.

The insolence or caprice of those mercenaries were often no less fatal to their friends, than their valour and discipline were formidable to their enemies.—*Robertson's Hist. of Charles V.*

The daring soul of the first Cæsar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curbing the insolence of the victorious legions.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

His ignorance or severity were alike unworthy of the important office with which he was entrusted. He gave laws which, according to the lively expression of an orator, seemed to be written, not with ink, but with blood; since death or banishment were his ordinary penalties for the most trivial offences.—*Gillies's Hist. of Greece.*

Neither death nor torture were sufficient to subdue the minds of Cargill and his intrepid followers.—*Fox's Hist. of James the Second.*

The above errors have apparently been committed through inattention to the proper signification of the particles.\*

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\* Similar errors may be found in the best writers of antiquity; for notwithstanding the suggestions of some very able critics, I am incapable of discovering how such passages, when they occur in an ancient author, are more easily to be reconciled with the strict rules of grammar. See Ruddiman's *Grammaticæ Latinæ Institutiones*, tom. ii. p. 28. Cortius ad Sallust. Cat. xliii. 1. Hunter ad. Horat. tom. i. p. 192.

——— Remo cum fratre Quirinus  
Jura dabunt.—*Virgil. Æneid. i. 292.*

Nam et castra expugnata sunt, atque ipse dux cum aliquot principibus capiuntur.—*Livii Hist. lib. xxi. cap. lx.*

Demosthenes cum ceteris, qui bene de republica mereri existimabantur, populiscito in exilium erant expulsi.—*C. Nepotis Vita Phocion. cap. ii.*

Adeo ut vel in transitu manumittantur; veluti cum prætor, aut præses, aut proconsul in balneum vel in theatrum eant.—*Justiniani Institutiones*, lib. i. tit. v. § 2. The excellent edition of Schrader, Berolini, 1832, 4to. reads *eat*; but the prevalent reading is *eant*. A manuscript in my possession exhibits the reading of *eunt*, which certainly is not preferable.

My learned friend Dr. Hunter contends that *manent* is the legitimate reading in the subsequent passage of Horace (lib. i. od. xiii.)

Tunc nec mens mihi, nec color  
Certa sedē manet.

*Each* of these words *imply* some pursuit or object relinquished.—*Blair's Lectures*.

It is requisite that the language of an heroic poem should be both perspicuous and sublime. In proportion as *either* of these two qualities are wanting, the language is imperfect.—*Addison, Spectator*.

*Neither* of them are remarkable for precision.—*Blair's Lectures*.

We should reckon *every* circumstance which *enable* them to divide and to maintain themselves in distinct and independent communities.—*Ferguson's Hist. of Civil Society*.

'Tis observable, that *every one* of the letters bear date after his banishment.—*Bentley's Dissert. on Themistocles's Epistles*.

Every invention known in the European art of war, as well as every precaution suggested by his long acquaintance with the Indian mode of fighting, were employed to ensure success.—*Robertson's Hist. of America*.

Here the distributive pronominal adjectives, *each*, *either*, *neither*, and *every*, are ungrammatically connected with verbs of the plural number.

*None*, which is a compound of *no one*, is manifestly singular; but is sometimes improperly connected with a plural verb.

No nation gives greater encouragements to learning than we do; yet at the same time *none* are so injudicious in the application.—*Goldsmith on Polite Learning*.

*None* were permitted to enter the holy precincts, without confess-

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"*Manent omnes Cruquii et multi aliorum MSS. quae vera lectio videtur: neque, ut grammatici putant, repugnat Latinitas.*" He afterwards subjoins, "*Eodem itaque redit, sive dicas, - - - nec mens MANET, nec color MANET, sive nec mens nec color MANENT; aut mens MANET aut color MANET, sive aut mens aut color MANENT.*" But the particles *nec* and *aut* are manifestly disjunctive; and when they are inserted between two nouns of the singular number, those nouns do not constitute a nominative plural to the verb. This is the rule, and this the general practice of the Latin classics; and any deviation from the rule is, I think, to be considered in no other light than that of an error or oversight.

ing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign deity.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

### 3. *Grammatical Errors in the Use of Participles.*

Among the number of grammatical errors, may we be permitted to reckon the use of the past tense active, as the participle perfect passive, in those verbs which admit of a more complete and systematic form?

I had no sooner *drank*, but (than) I found a pimple rising in my forehead.—*Addison, Tatler.*

Notwithstanding the prophetic predictions of this critic, I do not find that any science hath *throve* among us of late, so much as the minute philosophy.—*Berkeley's Minute Philosopher.*

Had he *wrote* English poetry in so unenlightened a period, the world would have lost his refined diction and harmonious versification.—*Warton's Observations on Spenser.*

Every book ought to be read with the same spirit, and in the same manner as it is *writ*.—*Fielding's Tom Jones.*

In this respect, the seeds of future divisions were *sow'd* abundantly.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

The court of Augustus had not *wore* off the manners of the republic.—*Hume's Essays.*

A free constitution, when it has been *shook* by the iniquity of former administrations.—*Bolingbroke's Idea of a Patriot King.*

He is God in his friendship, as well as his nature, and therefore we sinful creatures are not *took* upon advantages, nor consumed in our provocations.—*South's Sermons.*

Which some philosophers, not considering so well as I, have *mis-took* to be different in their causes.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

The greater regard was *show'd*, and the expectations rais'd higher, as these were of a base nature, or of a more noble, thriving, or innocent quality.—*Arbuthnot's Congress of Bees.*

Moses tells us, that the fountains of the earth were *broke* open, or *clove* asunder.—*Burnet's Theory of the Earth.*

I easily foresee, that, as soon as I lay down my pen, this nimble operator will have *stole* it.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

By this expedient, the public peace of libraries might certainly have been preserved, if a new species of controversial books had not arose of late years.—*Swift's Battle of the Books.*

The steps which lead to perfection are many, and we are at a loss on whom to bestow the greatest share of our praise; on the first or on the last who may have bore a part in the progress.—*Ferguson's Hist. of Civil Society.*

In these examples, the past tense active is used instead of the perfect participle. This confusion should upon every occasion be scrupulously avoided. The English language admits not of any great variety of termination, but of such as it does admit, we ought duly to avail ourselves. It is certainly of advantage that the different modifications of verbs should be properly distinguished from each other.

Before we conclude this branch of the subject, it will be proper to warn the reader against permitting a verb to succeed a participle in such an ungraceful manner as appears in the following passages.

The author is informed, that the bookseller has prevailed on several gentlemen to write some explanatory notes, for the goodness of which he is not to answer; *having never seen* any of them, nor *intends* it, till they appear in print.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

Nor is it then a welcome guest, *affording* only an uneasy sensation, and *brings* always with it a mixture of concern and compassion.—*Fielding's Essay on Conversation.*

#### 4. Grammatical Errors in the Use of Adjectives.

Adjectives which have a comparative or superlative signification, do not admit the addition of the words *more*, *most*, or of the termination *er*, *est*. The following passages are therefore liable to exception.

The last are indeed *more preferable*, because they are founded on

some new knowledge or improvement in the mind of man.—*Addison, Spectator.*

From these various causes, which in a greater or lesser degree affected every individual in the colony, the indignation of the people became general.—*Robertson's Hist. of America.*

The *chiefest* of which was known by the name of Archon among the Grecians.—*Dryden's Life of Plutarch.*

The two *chiefest* properties of air, its gravity and elastic force, have been discovered by mechanical experiments.—*Arbuthnot's Essay on Mathematical Learning.*

The *chiefest* and largest are removed to certain magazines they call libraries.—*Swift's Battle of the Books.*

The *extremest* parts of the earth were meditating a submission.—*Atterbury's Sermons.*

When only two objects are compared together, it is improper to use the superlative degree. It is proper to say the *more* elegant of the two, the *most* elegant of the three. This obvious rule has however been neglected by various writers of eminence.

This was in reality the *easiest* manner of the two.—*Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author.*

In every well-formed mind this second desire seems to be the *strongest* of the two.—*Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.*

Were it not for this, the secondary rocks, being in position superincumbent on the primary, ought to be the *highest* of the two.—*Playfair's Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory.*

Of impossibility there are no degrees; and we must therefore condemn such phraseology as occurs in the following quotations :

As it was impossible they should know the words, thoughts, and secret actions of all men, so was it *more impossible* they should pass judgment on them according to these things.—*Whitby's Necessity of the Christian Revelation.*

It will every day be *more impossible* to engage in that occupation.—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxi. p. 23.



The adjective *antiquarian* is not unfrequently used as a substantive, but the most legitimate form is *antiquary*.

Adjectives are sometimes improperly used as adverbs :

I shall endeavour to live hereafter *suitable* to a man in my station.  
—Addison, *Spectator*.

The queen having changed her ministry *suitable* to her own wisdom.—Swift, *Examiner*.

He behaved himself *conformable* to that blessed example.—Sprat's *Sermons*.

His expectations run high, and the fund to supply them is *extreme* scanty.—Lancaster's *Essay on Delicacy*.

I can never think so very *mean* of him.—Bentley's *Dissertation on Phalaris*.

There is *scarce* any society so wretched as to be destitute of some sort of weak provision against the injustice of their governors.—Mackintosh's *Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations*.

The twofold action of heat to expand and to melt, could *scarce* be pointed out more clearly by any system of appearances.—Playfair's *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory*.

In these examples, the idiom of the language requires the adverbs, *suitably*, *conformably*, *extremely*, *meanly*, and *scarcely*.

### 5. *Grammatical Errors in the Use of Negative and Disjunctive Particles.*

That *neither* partiality or prejudice appear, but that truth may everywhere be sacred.—Dryden's *Life of Plutarch*.

There is another use that, in my opinion, contributes rather to make a man learned than wise, and is *neither* capable of pleasing the understanding or imagination.—Addison on *Medals*.

These, like a hand with an inscription, can point out the straight way upon the road, but can *neither* tell you the next turnings, resolve

your doubts, or answer your questions, like a guide that has traced it over, and perhaps knows it as well as his chamber.—*Temple on Ancient and Modern Learning.*

He was early charged by Asinius Pollio as *neither faithful or exact*.—*Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland.*

*Neither* Cellarius or D'Anville have sufficiently attended to this object.—*Vincent's Voyage of Nearchus.*

The legitimate correspondent of *neither* is *nor*.

We need not, *nor* do not, confine the purposes of God.—*Bentley's Sermons.*

In the growth and stature of souls as well as bodies, the common productions are of different sizes, that occasion no gazing, *nor* no wonder.—*Temple on Ancient and Modern Learning.*

I'll prove by twenty-five substantial reasons, that you're no composer, *nor* know no more of music than you do of algebra.—*Arbuthnot's Harmony in an Uproar.*

*Nor* is danger ever apprehended in such a government from the violence of the sovereign, *no* more than we commonly apprehend danger from thunder or earthquakes.—*Hume's Essays.*

Among them the people were obliged to consider, not what was safe, but what was necessary; and could *not* always defend themselves against usurpations, *neither* by legal forms, nor by open war.—*Ferguson's Hist. of the Roman Republic.*

In each of these sentences, there is a double negative, which in English amounts to an affirmative.

## II. FOREIGN IDIOMS.

The use of such constructions as belong to the idiom of another language, is, like every specious of affectation, apt to be disgusting.\* An author may some-

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\* Dryden "had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation; such as *fraicheur* for coolness, *fougue* for turbulence, and a few more,



times happen to admit them through mere inadvertency, but he may likewise have recourse to them in order to display his erudition.

The popular lords did not fail to *enlarge themselves* on the subject.—*Macaulay's Hist. of England.*

The duchess of Lorrain *whom it* highly imported, on account of the vicinity of her dominions, that the two kings should put an end to the war, acted with great assiduity the part of mediator between them.—*Watson's Hist. of Philip II.*

Solomon was of this mind; and I make no doubt but he made as wise and true proverbs as any body has done since; *Him* only excepted, who was a much greater and wiser man than Solomon.—*Tillotson's Sermons.*

Removing the term from Westminster, *sitting the parliament*, was illegal.—*Macaulay's Hist. of England.*

I shall here subjoin some examples of prepositions, which, if not applied according to the idiom of other languages, are at least applied contrary to the general usage of our standard writers.

The only actions *to* (upon) which we have always seen, and still see all of them *intent*, are such as tend to the destruction of one another.—*Burke's Vindication of Natural Society.*

*To* (with) which, as Bishop Burnet tells us, the Prince of Orange was willing to comply.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

He had been perplexed with a long compliance *to* (with) foreign manners.—*Sprat's Life of Cowley.*

Your character, which I, or any other writer may now value ourselves *by* (upon) drawing, will probably be dropt, on account of the antiquated style and manner they are delivered in.—*Swift on the English Tongue.*

The discovery he made and communicated *with* (to) his friends.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

The people being only convoked upon such occasions as, by this

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none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators." (Johnson's Lives of English Poets, vol. ii. p. 189.)

institution of Romulus, fell *into* (under) their cognizance.—*Swift's Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome.*

Not from any personal hatred to them, but in justification *to* (of) the best of queens.—*Swift, Examiner.*

The wisest princes need not think it any diminution *to* (of) their greatness, or derogation *to* (from) their sufficiency, to rely upon counsel.—*Bacon's Essays.*

A supercilious attention to minute formalities, is a certain indication of a little mind, conscious *to* (of) the want of innate dignity.—*Hawkerworth's Almoran and Hamet.*

He found the greatest difficulty *of* (in) writing.—*Hume's Hist. of England.*

The esteem which Philip had conceived *of* (for) the ambassador.—*Ibid.*

The greatest difficulty was found *of* (in) fixing just sentiments.—*Ibid.*

The Christians were driven out of all their Asiatic possessions, in acquiring *of* which (in acquiring which) incredible numbers of men had perished.—*Robertson's View of Society.*

You know the esteem I have *of* (for) his philosophy.—*Kames's Law Tracts.*

Meanwhile the prudence of Gylippus profited *of* (by) the fame of his victory.—*Gillies's Hist. of Greece.*

He is so resolved *of* (on) going to the Persian court.—*Bentley's Dissert. on Themistocles's Epistles.*

Neither the one nor the other shall make me swerve *out of* (from) the path which I have traced to myself.—*Bolingbroke's Letter to Wyndham.*

I do likewise dissent *with* (from) the Examiner.—*Addison, Whig-Examiner.*

Dr. Johnson (*with* (from) whom I am sorry to differ in opinion) has treated it as a work of merit.—*Scott's Critical Essays.*

Ovid, whom ye accuse *for* (of) luxuriance of verse.—*Dryden on Dramatic Poesy.*

If policy can prevail *upon* (over) force.—*Addison's Travels.*

This effect, we may safely say, no one beforehand could have promised *upon*.—*Hume's Hist. of England.*

A greater quantity may be taken from the heap, without making any sensible alteration *upon* (in) it.—*Hume's Essays.*

Every office of command should be intrusted to persons *on* (in) whom the parliament shall confide.—*Macaulay's History of England.*

All of which required abundance of finesse and delicatessen to manage with advantage, as well as a strict observance *after* (of) times and fashions.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub*.

The memory of Lord Peter's injuries produced a degree of hatred and spite, which had a much greater share *of* (in) inciting him than any regards *after* (for) his father's commands.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub*.

Among other foreign idioms we must class Scotisms. This subject requires a great degree of sedulous attention, in such natives of North Britain as are anxious to write the English language with correctness and purity. It would scarcely be consistent with our present design to exhibit a long list of provincial expressions; but, as a specimen of the errors which they ought very carefully to avoid, I subjoin the following quotations, all of them from writers of education.

He procured an act to facilitate the recovery of debts, by delivering the effects of the debtor to be divided among his creditors, upon an estimate of what the different *subjects* might have been sold for at the time that the war broke out.—*Ferguson's Hist. of the Roman Republic*.

*Subjects*, used to denote parcels of real property, is the only Scoticism which I have detected in this work of Dr. Ferguson. In reference to the same author's History of Civil Society, "I was surprised," says Gray, "to find not one single idiom of his country (I think) in the whole work."\* But *subjects*, employed in this sense, is the inveterate phraseology of the Scottish law: the northern newspapers abound with advertisements respecting the "sale of subjects;" and those advertisements are sometimes expressed in

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\* Gray's Works, vol. ii. p. 480, Mitford's edit.

such a manner as might lead us to imagine that her majesty's subjects, instead of certain portions of their real property, were themselves offered for sale.

Dismounting, therefore, and giving my horse to the *hirer*, who had come with me, I said, that upon the bank of the river I would take his advice whether or not I might proceed.—*Black's Life of Tasso*, vol. ii. p. 39.

With her was Wisdom, reverend sage;  
His awful front, his snowy hair,  
Expressed him of the train of age,  
And *versant* in the storms of care.

*Pinkerton's Rimes*, p. 16.

That is owing to his being so much *versant* in old English poetry.  
—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. vi. p. 299.

Scheele pursued a similar path, but was little *versant* in the history of science, and had none of the advantages of an improved apparatus.—*Leslie's Dissertation on the Progress of Mathematical and Physical Science*, p. 646.

The voice of the Son of God will pierce the caverns of the tomb, will be heard over the kingdoms of the dead, will reanimate the ashes of thousands of generations, and *sist* an assembled world at the seat of judgment.—*Logan's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 138.

It was *pled* with a sophistical effrontery, that their separation would most effectually contribute to that end.—*Somerville's Hist. of the Reign of Queen Anne*, p. 518.

These towns Alva professed he took possession of *in name* of the college of cardinals, and of the future pope.—*Black's Life of Tasso*, vol. i. p. 47.

As neither party can be compelled by law to *implement* these bargains, their sense of honour, and the disgrace attending a breach of contract, are the principles by which the business is supported.—*Hamilton's Inquiry concerning the National Debt*, p. 182.

To *implement*, signifying to fulfil, is likewise derived from the barbarous jargon of the Scottish bar. To *lead* proof, to *sist* before a tribunal, the *panel*, meaning the prisoner at the bar, and many similar elegancies, are to be traced to the same origin.

H. Stephanus and Vorstius have each written a treatise *De Latinitate falso suspecta*. I shall here exhibit a short specimen of English words and phrases which Dr. Beattie has branded as Scoticisms.\* The catalogue might without much difficulty be enlarged; and it is doubtless of some importance to ascertain what words we may safely adopt, and what we ought to reject.

*Desuetude*.—"This word," says Dr. Beattie, "may be found in some English books, but is very uncommon." Dr. Johnson has however quoted two examples, and I could easily add many others.†

Some of them, which certainly did derive from the apostles, are expir'd and gone out in a *desuetude*.—*Bishop Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying*, p. 125.

This solemnity was gone into *desuetude* about the time of Tiberius.—*Dr. Taylor's Elements of the Civil Law*, p. 280.

What the wisdom of either age omitted, or was unable to do, time, and that *desuetude* which attends upon it, will gradually bring about.—*Hurd's Moral and Political Dialogues*, vol. iii. p. 163.

There is a confirmed *desuetude* in both readers and writers with respect to Latin composition.—*Knox's Winter Evenings*, vol. ii. p. 214.

*By-past*.—The reward of his *by-past* labours.—*Blackburne's Confessional*, p. 446.

*Curt*.—His style of writing was *curt*, and something harsh and obscure.—*Dr. Lightfoot's Preface to the Works of Hugh Broughton*.

*Ornate Latin*.—"This phrase," says Dr. Beattie, "if it mean any thing, would mean, in English, Latin too much ornamented."

Until it be time to open her contracted palm into a gracefull and *ornate* rhetoric.—*Milton's Tractate of Education*.

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\* Beattie's Scoticisms, arranged in alphabetical order. Edinb. 1787, 8vo.

† See Nares's *Elements of Orthoepey*, p. 179. Lond. 1784, 8vo.

Had there been nothing extant of him but his history of Scotland, consider but the language, how florid and *ornate* it is.—*E. Phillips's Preface to Drummond's Poems.* Lond. 1656, 8vo.

I always took a sermon to the people to require a grave and *ornate* kind of eloquence.—*Lister's Journey to Paris*, p. 174.

*Relevant* has been stigmatized by Dr. Beattie, and *irrelevant* by Mr. George Mason;\* but the subsequent quotations will be sufficient to evince that the words have long been naturalized.

A protestation contrary to the act which is done, is not *relevant*.—*Ayliffe's Pandect of the Civil Law*, p. 595.

If there happen to be found an *irrelevant* expression.—*Dryden's Preface to his Fables*.

To *notice*.—I shall only *notice* the judgment of the bishops.—*Gibbon*, vol. ix. p. 165.

To *take* an infectious disease.—Women are never entirely secure from it at any age, though the older they are, they are found to be the less apt to *take* the infection.—*Heberden's Commentaries on the History and Cure of Diseases*, p. 27.

To *succumb*.—This word is branded by Dr. Beattie; and Sir John Sinclair has remarked that "*succumb* is used by Foote in his farce of the Knights, but has always been accounted a word peculiarly Scottish."† It is nevertheless used by the late bishop of Landaff.

Their historian describes liberty and public probity as *succumbing* under the corrupting influence of wealth and power.—*Life of Bishop Watson*, vol. ii. p. 12.

Angry *at* a person.—"One is angry *at* a thing, and

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\* *Mason's Supplement to Johnson's English Dictionary.* Lond. 1801, 4to.

† *Sinclair's Observations on the Scottish Dialect*, p. 94. Lond. 1782, 8vo.



with a person. But this is not uniformly attended to, even by good writers." The phrase at all events is not peculiar to Scotland.

He was therefore angry at Swift.—*Johnson's Lives of English Poets*, vol. iv. p. 111.

*At six years old*.—This may perhaps be an improper expression, but it is by no means a Scoticism.

*At six years old*, he was sent to school at Kilkenny.—*Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life of Swift*.

*At two years old*, these qualities were perceptible in the brilliancy of his eyes.—*Lord Holland's Life of Lope de Vega*, p. 7.

*Almost nothing* he considers as a phrase purely Scottish; with what propriety, the following quotations will sufficiently testify.

So insignificant as, in the view of reason, to be *almost nothing* in themselves.—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 174.

Addison had enough of the zeal of party; but Steele had at that time *almost nothing* else.—*Johnson's Lives of English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 343.

They all seemed very idle; and indeed their whole object appears to be, to spend their last days in Jerusalem, doing *almost nothing*.—*Jowett's Christian Researches in Syria and the Holy Land*, p. 217.

To establish these facts, *almost no apparatus* is required.—*Herschel's Treatise on Astronomy*, p. 74.

I do not affirm that all these idioms are to be considered as elegant; but the examples which I have quoted will at least shew that they are not exclusively Scottish.

There are likewise many provincial idioms peculiar to Ireland; and in forming a list of Hibernicisms, it might be proper to begin with such ungraceful ellipses as "county Clare," and "island Magee," used instead of "the county of Clare," and "the island of

Magee.”\* But the most plentiful harvest of barbarous phraseology is to be gathered in America, where the changes in the English language have been so considerable, as in many cases to render it unintelligible to an Englishman.† An American lawyer, Mr. Pickering, has published a Vocabulary which may be of great service to such of his countrymen as have any wish to write with purity. “It is true,” he remarks, “that our countrymen may speak and write in a *dialect* of English, which will be understood in the *United States*; but if they are ambitious of having their works read by Englishmen as well as by Americans, they must write in a language that Englishmen can read with pleasure. And if for some time to come it should not be the lot of many Americans to publish works, which will be read out of their own country, yet all who have the least tincture of learn-

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\* In the following sentence, Dr. Walsh indicates the land of his nativity: “It was instantly promised by his friendly visitor; who asked him again, *was there* any thing else in which he could gratify him.” (Narrative of a Journey from Constantinople to England, p. 45. Lond. 1828, 8vo.) An Englishman would have said, *if there was*.

† Some favourite words of our transatlantic brethren, such as *grade* and *to progress*, have lately become very current among the editors of the London newspapers, but it is to be hoped that they will continue to be excluded from all English works of a more durable nature. The fugitive literature of the day has a strong tendency to introduce a species of jargon; and a motley phraseology is culled from many different quarters. “The hustings are now *being erected*, and the *talented* gentleman will speedily address the electors. The cause of reform is triumphantly *progressing*, and he is therefore supported by persons of every *grade*.” This Babylonish dialect is partly derived from Cockneyland, partly from Ireland and America.



ing, will continue to feel an ardent desire to acquaint themselves with English authors. Let us then, for a moment, imagine the time to have arrived, when Americans shall no longer be able to understand the works of Milton, Pope, Swift, Addison, and other English authors, justly styled classic, without the aid of a *translation* into a language that is to be called, at some future day, the *American* tongue! By such a change, it is true, our loss would not be so great in works purely scientific, as in those which are usually termed works of taste; for the obvious reason, that the design of the former is merely to communicate information, without regard to elegance of language, or the force and beauty of the sentiments. But the excellencies of works of taste cannot be felt even in the best translations; a truth which, without resorting to the example of the matchless ancients, will be acknowledged by every man who is acquainted with the admirable works extant in various living languages. Nor is this the only view in which a radical change of language would be an evil. To say nothing of the facilities afforded by a *common language* in the ordinary intercourse of business, it should not be forgotten, that our religion and our laws are studied in the language of the nation from which we are descended; and, with the loss of the language, we should finally suffer the loss of those peculiar advantages, which we now derive from the investigations of the jurists and divines of that country.”\*

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\* A Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States of America: to

## III. NEW AND OBSOLETE WORDS.

On this subject, I shall take the liberty of quoting a passage from Dr. Armstrong, but without professing to adopt all the opinions which it contains.

"It is the easiest thing imaginable to coin words. The most ignorant of the mobility are apt to do it every day, and are laughed at for it. What best can justify the introducing a new word, is necessity, where there is not an established one to express your meaning. But while all the world understands what is meant by the word *pleasure*, which sounds very well too, what occasion can there be for saying *volupty*?

"Nothing can deform a language so much as an inundation of new words and phrases. It is indeed the readiest way to demolish it. If there is any need to illustrate the barbarous effects which a mixture of new words must produce, only consider how a discourse, patched all over with sentences in different languages, would sound; or how oddly it would strike you in a serious conversation to hear, from the same

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which is prefixed an Essay on the present State of the English Language in the United States. By John Pickering. Boston, 1816, 8vo.—Mr. Pickering, one of the most learned American writers with whom I am acquainted, is likewise the author of *An Essay on the Pronunciation of the Greek Language*. Cambridge, 1818, 4to. In this work, he strenuously contends that the true pronunciation of the ancient language is to be learned from the practice of the modern Greeks. "In almost every instance, in short, where the opinions of the learned have been at variance with the usage of the modern Greeks, whenever any evidence has been discovered relating to the point in controversy, the theories of the former have proved to be unfounded, and the usage of the latter confirmed."

person, a mixture of all the various dialects and tones of the several counties and shires of the three kingdoms; though it is still the same language. To make it sensible to the eye; how greatly would a mixture of Roman, Italick, Greek, and Saxon characters deform a page? A picture imitating the style of different masters, which is commonly called a Gallery of Painters, can never be pleasing for the same reasons, want of union and harmony.

“ The present licentious humour of coining and borrowing words seems to portend no good to the English language; and it is grievous to think with what *volupty* two or *poetararorencouroac*\* eminent personages have *opiniatred* the *inchoation* of such *fu-tile* barbarisms.

“ In short, the liberty of coining words ought to be used with great modesty. Horace, they say, gave but two, and Virgil only one to the Latin tongue, which was squeamish enough not to swallow those, even from such hands, without some reluctance. ---

“ Instead of creating a parcel of awkward new words, I imagine it would be an improvement to degrade many of the old ones from their peerage. I am but a private man, and without authority; but an absolute prince, if he was of my opinion, would make it capital ever to say *encroach* or *encroachment*, or any thing that belongs to *encroaching*. I would commit *inculcate*, for all its Latinity, to the care of the paviours; and it should never appear above ground again.

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\* “ The word for the number three, in one of the American languages; which, to judge by this specimen, cannot be barbarous for want of polysyllables.”

If you have the least sympathy with the human ear, never say *purport* while you breathe; nor *betwixt*, except you have first repeated *between* till we are quite tired of it. *Methinks* strongly resembles the broken language of a German in his first attempts to speak English. *Methought* lies under the same objection, but it sounds better.

“It is full time that *froward* should be turned out of all good company, especially as *perverse* is ready at hand to supply his place. *Vouchsafe* is a very civil gentleman; but as his courtesy is somewhat old-fashioned, we wish he would *deign*, or *condescend*, or *be pleased*, to retire.

“From what rugged road, I wonder, did *swerve* deviate into the English language?—But this *subject matter*! In the name of every thing that is disgusting and detestable, what is it? Is it one or two ugly words?—Yet one dares hardly ever peep into a preface, for fear of being stared in the face with this nasty *subject matter*.”\*

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### CHAP. III.

#### OF PROPRIETY OF STYLE.

PROPRIETY of style stands opposed to vulgarisms or low expressions, and to words and phrases that

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\* Armstrong's Miscellanies, vol. ii. p. 147. Lond. 1770, 2 vols. 8vo.

would be less significant of the ideas which we mean to convey. An author may be deficient in propriety, either by making choice of such words as do not express the idea which he intends, but some other which only resembles it; or such as express that idea, but not fully and completely. He may also be deficient in this respect by making choice of words or phrases, which habit has taught us to regard as mean and vulgar.

All that I propose in relation to this subject, is to collect from the writings of different authors a considerable number of vulgar phrases.

These and many other particulars might easily *choke* the faith of a philosopher, who believed no more than what he could deduce from the principles of nature.—*Dryden's Life of Plutarch.*

The kings of Syria and Egypt, the kings of Pergamus and Macedon, without intermission *worried* each other for above two hundred years.—*Burke's Vindication of Natural Society.*

Archbishop Tillotson is too often careless and languid; and is much *outdone* by Bishop Atterbury, in the music of his periods.—*Blair's Lectures.*

Every year a new flower in his judgment *beats* all the old ones, though it is much inferior to them both in colour and shape.—*Mandeville on the Nature of Society.*

I am wonderfully pleased when I meet with any passage in an old Greek or Latin author that is not *blown upon*, and which I have never met with in a quotation.—*Addison, Spectator.*

His name must *go down* to posterity with distinguished honour in the public records of the nation.—*Hurd's Life of Warburton.*

Learning and the arts were but then *getting up*.—*Hyrd's Dialogues.*

We enter into their gratitude towards those faithful friends who did not desert them in their difficulties; and we heartily *go along* with their resentment, against those perfidious traitors who injured, abandoned, or deceived them.—*Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.*

Fraternal hands and Christian *lit* the flame.

*Mason's English Garden.*

This is a vulgar, or at least a colloquial abbreviation



of *lighted*. Dr. Bentley uses such a phrase as I *lit* upon a passage.

Alarmed by the ungoverned, and, in him, unprecedented, emotions of Edgar, he *had been to* Beech Park.—*D'Arblay's Camilla*.

It was but of a *piece*, indeed, that a ceremony conducted in defiance of humanity, should be founded in contempt of justice.—*Melmoth's Letters of Fitzosborne*,

It is well, if the reader, without rejecting *by the lump*, endeavour patiently to gather the plain meaning.—*Kames's Elements of Criticism*.

Eloquence, style, composition, and *such like*, have already been so frequently and so fully treated by various writers, that it seems scarcely justifiable to resume them.—*Leland's Dissertation on Eloquence*.

Rabelais had too much *game* given him for *satire* in that age by the customs of courts and convents, of processes and of wars, of schools and of camps, of romances and legends.—*Temple on Poetry*.

One would think there was (*were*) more sophists than one *had a finger* in this volume of letters.—*Bentley on Socrates's Epistles*.

*I had as lief* say a thing after him as after another.—*Louth's Letter to Warburton*.

If all these were exemplary in the conduct of their lives, things would soon *take a new face*, and religion receive a mighty encouragement.—*Swift on the Advancement of Religion*.

Nor would he do it to maintain debate, or shew his wit, but plainly tell me what *stuck with him*.—*Burnet's Life of Rochester*.

It *fell out* unfortunately that two of these principal persons *fell out*, and had a fatal quarrel.—*Clarendon's Life*.

This is worse than the description of the children sliding on the ice, all on a summer day; of whom we are told, "It so *fell out* they all *fell in*."

Content, therefore, I am, my lord, that Britain stands in this respect as she now does. Able enough she is at present to *shift for herself*.—*Shaftesbury's Letter concerning Design*.

What is it but a kind of rack that forces men to say *what they have no mind to*?—*Cowley's Essays*.

Time hangs heavy on their hands; they know not how to employ it, or *what to make of themselves*.—*Logan's Sermons*.

This is one among the many reasons which render biography the most agreeable kind of reading in the world.—*Roberts, Looker-on.*

A perfect union of wit and judgment is one of the rarest things in the world.—*Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

In the mean time, the affairs of Bernardo went on indifferently well at Madrid, being furthered, as he supposed, by Ray Gomez, prince of Evoli.—*Black's Life of Tasso.*

He went into all the best things that were in that great man, but so that he perfected every one of them.—*Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson.*

A lady of fashion in Ireland, of the first rate for beauty, elegance, and accomplishment, was going apace into this way, at the instance of a proselyting acquaintance.—*Jones's Memoirs of Bishop Horne.*

The last two sentences are each written in so abject a style, that there is little or no room left for the distinction of Italics.

Whoever is in the least acquainted with Grecian history must know that their legislator, by the severity of his institutions, formed the Spartans into a robust, hardy, valiant nation, made for war.—*Leland's History of Philip.*

He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.—*Johnson's Life of Dryden.*

From that time he resolved to make no more translations.—*Johnson's Life of Pope.*

It is my design to comprise in this short paper, the substance of those numerous dissertations the critics have made on the subject.—*Pope's Discourse on Pastoral Poetry.*

A few reflections on the rise and progress of our distemper, and the rise and progress of our cure, will help us of course to make a true judgment.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

This application of the verb *make* is somewhat awkward, as well as familiar. To make tragedies, to make translations, to make dissertations, to make judgments, are expressions which ought very cautiously to be admitted into a dignified composition.

A vulgar expression, says Longinus, is sometimes

much more significant than an elegant one.\* This may readily be granted ; but however significant it may be, no expression that has a tendency to create sensations of disgust, will, by a judicious writer, be thought worthy of admission.

The following quotation will serve to shew how the most beautiful descriptions of poetry may be deformed by the introduction of one low or vulgar expression.

'Tis night, dread night, and weary Nature lies  
So fast as if she never were to rise ;  
No breath of wind now whispers thro' the trees,  
No noise at land, nor murmur in the seas ;  
Lean wolves forget to howl at night's pale noon,  
No wakeful dogs bark at the silent moon,  
Nor bay the ghosts that glide with horror by  
To view the caverns where their bodies lie ;  
The ravens perch, and no presages give,  
Nor to the windows of the dying cleave ;  
The owls forget to scream ; no midnight sound  
Calls drowsy Echo from the hollow ground ;  
In vaults the walking fires extinguished lie ;  
The stars, heaven's sentries, *wink*, and seem to die.—*Lee*.

The practice of describing objects and circumstances peculiar to ancient times, by terms characteristic of modern institutions and manners, may safely be classed among the chief improprieties of style. Gavin Douglas, the celebrated bishop of Dunkeld, has exhibited many curious instances of this practice in his Scotch version of the *Æneid*: the Sibyl, for example, is converted into a nun, and admonishes Æneas, the Trojan baron, to persist in counting his beads. This plan of reducing every

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\* Longinus de Sublimitate, § xxxi.



ancient notion to a modern standard, has been adopted by much later writers: many preposterous instances occur in Dr. Blackwell's *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*; and Dr. Middleton, who, if not a more learned, is certainly a more judicious writer, has in his *Life of Cicero* been repeatedly betrayed into the same species of affectation. Balbus was general of the *artillery* to Cæsar; Cicero procured a *regiment* for Curtius; Tediùs took the body of Clodius into his *chaise*; Coelius was a young *gentleman* of equestrian rank. In the following passage, which is Dr. Doig's translation of a quotation from the scholiast on Pindar, we encounter *ladies* at a very early period in the history of society; inasmuch as they are found in the very act of discovering the use of petticoats: "The same *ladies*, too, from a sense of decency, invented garments made of the bark of trees."\* A late historian of Greece speaks of a *bill* being proposed in the Athenian assembly, and of the light *dragoons* of Alexander the Great.†

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## CHAP. IV.

### OF PRECISION OF STYLE.

THE third quality which enters into the composition of a perspicuous style, is precision. This im-

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\* Encyclopædia Britannica (art. *Philology*) vol. xvii. p. 393.

† Gillies's *Hist. of Ancient Greece*, vol. ii. p. 243. vol. iv. p. 259.

plies the retrenching of all superfluity of expression. A precise style exhibits an exact copy of the writer's ideas. To write with precision, though this be properly a quality of style, he must possess a very considerable degree of distinctness in his manner of thinking. Unless his own conceptions be clear and accurate, he cannot convey to the minds of others a clear and accurate knowledge of the subject which he treats.

Looseness of style, which is properly opposed to precision, generally arises from using a superfluity of words. Feeble writers employ a multitude of words to make themselves understood, as they imagine, more distinctly; but, instead of accomplishing this purpose, they only bewilder their readers. They are sensible that they have not caught an expression calculated to convey their precise meaning; and therefore they endeavour to illustrate it by heaping together a mass of ill-consorted phrases. The image which they endeavour to present to our mind, is always viewed double, and no double image can be viewed distinctly. When an author speaks of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expression is precise, and I understand it fully; but if, for the sake of multiplying words, he should afterwards extol his *fortitude*, my thoughts immediately begin to waver between those two attributes. In thus endeavouring to express one quality more strongly, he introduces another. *Courage* resists danger, *fortitude* supports pain. The occasion of exerting each of those qualities is different: and being led to think of both together when only one of them should be presented to

me, I find my view rendered unsteady, and my conception of the great object indistinct.

An author may be very intelligible, without being precise. He uses proper words, and proper arrangements; but as his own ideas are loose and general, he cannot express them with any great degree of precision. Few authors in the English language are more easily understood than Archbishop Tillotson and Sir William Temple, yet neither of them can pretend to much precision; they are loose and diffuse, and very often do not select such expressions as are adapted for conveying simply the idea which they have in view: it is frequently associated with some kindred notion.

All subjects do not require to be treated with the same degree of precision. It is requisite that in every species of writing this quality should in some measure be perceptible; but we must at the same time be upon our guard, lest the study of precision, especially in treating subjects which do not rigidly require it, should betray us into a dry and barren style; lest, from the desire of pruning more closely, we retrench all copiousness and ornament. A deficiency of this kind may be remarked in the serious compositions of Swift.

To unite copiousness with precision, to be flowing and graceful, and at the same time correct and exact in the choice of every word, is one of the highest and most difficult attainments in writing. Some species of composition may require more of copiousness and ornament, others more of precision and accuracy; and even the same composition may, in different parts,

require a difference of style ; but these qualities must never be totally sacrificed to each other.

“ If,” says Dr. Armstrong, “ I *was* to reduce my own private idea of the best language to a definition, I should call it the shortest, clearest, and easiest way of expressing one’s thoughts, by the most harmonious arrangement of the best chosen words both for meaning and sound. The best language is strong and expressive, without stiffness or affectation ; short and concise, without being either obscure or ambiguous ; and easy, and flowing, and disengaged, without one undetermined or superfluous word.”\*

The want of precision is an unpardonable error in a writer who treats of philosophical subjects. On this account, the style of Lord Shaftesbury is highly exceptionable. The noble author seems to have been well acquainted with the power of words ; those which he employs are generally proper and sonorous ; and his arrangement is often judicious. His defect in precision is not so much imputable to indistinctness of conception, as to perpetual affectation. He is fond to excess of the pomp and parade of language ; he is never satisfied with expressing any thing clearly and simply ; he must always give it the dress of state and majesty. Afraid of delivering his thoughts arrayed in a mean and ordinary garb, and allured by an appearance of splendour, he heaps together a crowd of superfluous words, and inundates every idea which he means to express with a torrent of copious loquacity. Hence perpetual circumlocutions, and many words

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\* Armstrong’s *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 133.

and phrases employed to describe what would have much better been described by one. If he has occasion to introduce any author, he very rarely mentions him by his proper name. In the treatise entitled *Advice to an Author*, he employs two or three successive pages in descanting upon Aristotle, without naming him in any other manner than as "the master critic," "the prince of critics," "the consummate philologist," "the grand master of art," "the mighty genius and judge of art." In the same manner, "the grand poetic sire," "the philosophical patriarch," and "his disciple of noble birth and lofty genius," are the only names by which he condescends to designate Homer, Socrates, and Plato. This method of distinguishing persons is extremely affected, but it is not so contrary to precision, as the frequent circumlocutions which he employs to express the powers and affections of the mind. In one passage, he denominates the moral faculty, "that natural affection and anticipating fancy, which makes the sense of right and wrong." When he has occasion to mention self-examination, or reflection on our own conduct, he speaks of it as "the act of a man's dividing himself into two parties, becoming a self-dialogist, entering into partnership with himself, and forming the dual number practically within himself."

In the following paragraph he wishes to shew, that by every vicious action we injure the mind as much as a man would injure his body by swallowing poison, or inflicting on himself a wound.

Now, if the fabric of the mind or temper appeared to us such as it really is; if we saw it impossible to remove hence any one good or orderly affection, or to introduce an ill or disorderly one, without



drawing on, in some degree, that dissolute state which, at its height, is confessed to be so miserable; it would then undoubtedly be confessed, that since no ill, immoral, or unjust action can be committed, without either a new inroad and breach on the temper and passions, or a farther advancing of that execution already done; whoever did ill, or acted in prejudice of his integrity, good nature, or worth, would of necessity act with greater cruelty towards himself, than he who scrupled not to swallow what was poisonous, or who with his own hands should voluntarily mangle or wound his outward form or constitution, natural limbs or body.—*Sicte: bury's Inquiry concerning Virtue.*

Such superfluity of words is offensive to every reader of a correct taste, and produces no other effect than that of embarrassing and perplexing the sense. To commit a bad action, is first, “to remove a good and orderly affection, and to introduce an ill or disorderly one;” next it is, “to commit an action that is ill, immoral, or unjust;” and then “to do ill, or to act in prejudice of integrity, good nature, or worth.” Nay, so very simple a thing as a man’s wounding himself, is, “to mangle or wound his outward form or constitution, natural limbs or body.”

Dr. Crombie has justly remarked, “that a due attention to accuracy of diction is highly conducive to correctness of thought. For, as it is generally true that he whose conceptions are clear, and who is master of his subject, delivers his sentiments with ease and perspicuity, so it is equally certain that, as language is not only the vehicle of thought, but also an instrument of invention, if we desire to attain a habit of conceiving clearly, and thinking correctly, we must learn to speak and write with accuracy and precision.”\*

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\* Crombie’s Etymology and Syntax of the English Language, p. 429, 3d edit. Lond. 1830, 8vo.

## CHAP. V.

## OF SYNONYMOUS WORDS.

MANY words are accounted synonymous, which are not so in reality; and indeed it has even been disputed whether two words can be found in any language, which express precisely the same idea. However closely they may approximate to each other in signification, still can the discriminating eye of the critic discover a line of separation between them. They agree in expressing one principal idea, but always express it with some diversity in the circumstances; they are varied by some accessory idea which severally accompanies each of the words, and which forms the distinction between them.

As they are like different shades of the same colour, an accurate writer can employ them to great advantage, by using them so as to heighten and to finish the picture which he gives us. He supplies by the one what was wanting in the other, to the force, or to the lustre of the image which he means to exhibit. But, with a view to this end, he must be extremely attentive to the choice which he makes of them; for the generality of writers are apt to confound them with each other, and to employ them with promiscuous carelessness, merely for the sake of filling up a period, or of diversifying the language. By using them as if their signification were precisely the same, they unwarily involve their ideas in a kind of mist.

Many instances might be given of a difference in meaning between words reputed synonymous. The following instances, which are chiefly selected from Dr. Blair and Mrs. Piozzi,\* may themselves be of some use; and they will besides serve to shew the necessity of attending, with the utmost care, to the exact significations of words, if ever we would write with propriety or precision.

*To abandon, forsake, relinquish, give up, desert, leave, quit.*—A man forsakes his mistress, abandons all hope of regaining her lost esteem, relinquishes his pretensions in favour of another; gives up a place of trust which he holds under government, deserts his party, leaves his parents in affliction, and quits the kingdom for ever.

*To abhor, detest.*—To abhor, imports, simply, strong dislike; to detest, imports also strong disapprobation. A man abhors being in debt; he detests treachery.

*Active, assiduous, sedulous, diligent, industrious.*—The king is happy who is served by an active minister, ever industrious to promote his country's welfare, nor less diligent to obtain intelligence of what is passing at other courts, than assiduous to relieve the

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\* Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. Lond. 1783, 2 vols. 4to. Piozzi's British Synonymy. Lond. 1794, 2 vols. 8vo. This lady's design is commendable, but her work is full of errors. Mr. Crabb has since published a much better book, entitled "English Synonymes explained." Lond. 1816, 8vo. An edition, greatly enlarged, has more recently appeared under the title of "English Synonymes, with copious Illustrations and Explanations, drawn from the best Writers." Lond. 1826, 4to.



cares of his royal master, and sedulous to study the surest methods of extending the commerce of the empire abroad, while he lessens all burdens upon the subjects at home.

*To avow, acknowledge, confess.*—Each of these words signifies the affirmation of a fact, but in very different circumstances. To avow, supposes the person to glory in it; to acknowledge, supposes a small degree of delinquency, which the acknowledgment compensates; to confess, supposes a higher degree of criminality. A patriot avows his opposition to a corrupt ministry, and is applauded; a gentleman acknowledges his mistake, and is forgiven; a prisoner confesses the crime of which he stands accused, and is punished.

*Austerity, severity, rigour.*—Austerity relates to modes of living or behaviour; severity of thinking; rigour of punishing. To austerity is opposed effeminacy; to severity relaxation; to rigour clemency. A hermit is austere in his life; a casuist severe in his application of moral principles; a judge rigorous in his sentences.

*Authentic, genuine.*—No two words are more frequently confounded, though their signification is sufficiently clear and distinct. Authentic refers to the character of a document; genuine, to the connexion between any production and its reputed author. We speak with correctness of the authenticity of Buchanan's history, and of the genuineness of the poems ascribed to Ossian; but the authenticity of Ossian's poems, properly denotes the authority of those poems in an historical point of view. Several

works have however appeared under the title of dissertations on the *authenticity* of Ossian's poems.\*

*Capacity, ability.*—Capacity relates to the mind's susceptibility of receiving impressions; ability to its power of making active exertions. The earl of Clarendon, being a man of extensive capacity, stored his mind with a variety of ideas; which circumstance contributed to the successful exertion of his vigorous abilities.

*Custom, habit.*—Custom respects the action, habit the actor. By custom, we mean the frequent repetition of the same act; by habit, the effect which that repetition produces on the mind or body. By the custom of walking often in the streets, one acquires a habit of idleness.

*A difficulty, an obstacle.*—A difficulty embarrasses, an obstacle stops us. The first generally expresses something arising from the nature and circumstances of the affair; the second, something arising from a foreign cause. Philip found difficulty in managing the Athenians, on account of their natural dispositions; but the eloquence of Demosthenes was the great obstacle to his designs.

*To distinguish, separate.*—We distinguish what we do not wish to confound; we separate what we wish

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\* "It may be of use," says Bishop Watson, "to remove this confusion in your argument, to state distinctly the difference between the genuineness and the authenticity of a book. A genuine book is that which was written by the person whose name it bears as the author of it. An authentic book is that which relates matters of fact as they really happened. A book may be genuine without being authentic; and a book may be authentic without being genuine." (Apology for the Bible, p. 183.)

to remove. Objects are distinguished from each other by their qualities; they are separated by the distance of time or place.

*Entire, complete.*—A thing is entire by wanting none of its parts; complete by wanting none of its appendages. A man may be master of an entire house, which has not one complete apartment.

*Equivocal, ambiguous.*—An equivocal expression has one sense open, and designed to be understood; another sense concealed, and understood only by the person who uses the expression. An ambiguous expression has apparently two senses, and leaves us at a loss which of them to prefer. An equivocal expression is used with an intention to deceive; an ambiguous one, when purposely adopted, with an intention to give full information. An honest man will refrain from employing an equivocal expression; a confused man may often utter ambiguous terms without any design.

*Haughtiness, disdain.*—Haughtiness is founded on the high opinion which we entertain of ourselves; disdain on the mean opinion which we entertain of others.

*To invent, to discover.*—To invent, signifies to produce something totally new; to discover, signifies to find out something which was before hidden. Galileo invented the telescope; Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood.

*Only, alone.*—Only imports that there is no other object of the same kind; alone imports being unaccompanied by any other object. An only child is one that has neither brother nor sister; a child alone, is one that is left by itself. There is a difference there-



fore, in precise language, between these two phrases, "Virtue only makes us happy;" and "Virtue alone makes us happy." Virtue only makes us happy, implies that nothing else can produce the effect. Virtue alone makes us happy, implies that virtue, unaccompanied with other advantages, makes us happy. In the following sentence, Mr. Gibbon has employed the two words as if they were perfectly synonymous: "Of the nineteen tyrants, Tetricus *only* was a senator; Piso *alone* was a noble." In the subsequent passage of Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V. the word *only* ought apparently to have been substituted for *alone*: "Duels, which at first could be appointed by the civil judge *alone*, were fought without the interposition of his authority, and in cases to which the law did not extend."

*Pride, vanity.*—Pride is a word of more extensive signification, and is sometimes applied in a favourable sense; we speak of honest, as well as of low pride. Vanity, which always refers to inconsiderable objects, is never mentioned with commendation. A man may be too proud to be vain. "Pride," says the learned and eloquent Dr. Brown, "is often confounded with vanity, from which it differs, both in its essence and its effects. The vain, as well as the proud man, is enamoured of his own qualities and circumstances, and deems them superior to those of others. But, as the constant object of the former is applause, he is continually displaying his talents, his virtues, or his dignity, in order to obtain it. Sensible of his dependance on mankind, for that commendation at which he is always aiming, he endeavours to insure their admiration, although he excite, at the

same time, their contempt. The proud man, on the contrary, disdains even commendation as a favour, but claims it as a debt, and demands respect as an homage to which he is entitled. Reverence is not a prize which he must win, but a property which it is injustice to withhold from him. The vain are objects of ridicule, but not of detestation. The proud are both contemptible and odious.”\*

*To remark, observe.*—We remark, in the way of attention, in order to remember; we observe, in the way of examination, in order to judge. A traveller remarks the most striking objects which he sees; a general observes all the motions of his enemy.

*Surprized, astonished, amazed, confounded.*—I am surprized at what is new or unexpected; I am astonished at what is vast or great; I am amazed at what is incomprehensible; I am confounded by what is shocking or terrible.

*Wisdom, prudence.*—Wisdom leads us to speak and act with propriety; prudence prevents our speaking or acting improperly. A wise man employs the most proper means for success; a prudent man the safest means to avoid being brought into danger.

*With, by.*—Both these particles express the connexion between some instrument, or means of effecting an end, and the agent who employs that instrument or those means: *with* expresses a more close

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\* Sermons by William Laurence Brown, D.D., Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen. Edinb. 1803, 8vo.—In the essential qualities of originality and energy, these sermons are greatly superior to Dr. Blair's; but as the success of a publication depends on many casualties, they have never obtained the same degree of popularity.

and immediate, *by* a more remote connexion. The proper distinction in the use of these particles is elegantly marked in a passage of Dr. Robertson's History of Scotland. When one of the old Scottish kings was making an enquiry into the tenure *by* which his nobles held their lands, they started up, and drawing their swords, "*By* these," said they, "we acquired our lands, and *with* these we will defend them." The following instances further exemplify the distinction. "He was killed *by* a stone which fell from the steeple." "He was killed *with* a stone *by* Peter." Here *with* refers to the instrument, and *by* to the agent.

## CHAP. VI.

### OF THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

OF a sentence or period, various definitions have been given. According to Aristotle, it is "a quantity of sound which bears a certain signification according to its combination, and of which some detached part is also significant."\* Against this definition some objections might perhaps be urged; it is however sufficient for our present purpose.

\* Λόγος δὲ ἐστὶ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ κατὰ συνθήκην, ἥς τῶν μερῶν τι σημαντικόν ἐστὶ κεχωρισμένον. (Aristoteles de Interpretatione, cap. iv.) See likewise his treatise De Poetica, p. 72, edit. Tyrwhitt.



A sentence always implies some one complete proposition or enunciation of thought; but every sentence does not confine itself to a single proposition.

A sentence consists of component parts, which are called its members; and as those members may be either few or many, and may be connected in several different ways, the same thought, or mental proposition, may often be either compressed into one sentence, or distributed into two or three, without the material breach of any rule.

Upon surveying the annals of past ages, it seems that the greatest geniuses have been subject to this historical darkness; as is evident in those great lights of antiquity, Homer and Euclid, whose writings indeed enrich mankind with perpetual stores of knowledge and delight; but whose lives are for the most part concealed in impenetrable oblivion.—*Taylor's Life of Orpheus.*

The same meaning may thus be expressed in three sentences: "Upon surveying the annals of past ages, it seems that the greatest geniuses have been subject to this historical darkness. This is evidently the case with regard to those great lights of antiquity, Homer and Euclid. Their writings enrich mankind with perpetual stores of knowledge and delight; but their lives are for the most part concealed in impenetrable oblivion."

With regard to the precise length of sentences, no positive rule can be laid down; in this particular the writer must always be regulated by his own taste. A short period is lively and familiar; a long period, requiring more attention, makes an impression grave and solemn. There may be an extreme on either

side.\* By means of too many short sentences, the sense is divided and broken, the connexion of thought weakened, and the memory burdened, by being presented with a long succession of minute objects; and, on the other hand, by the too frequent use of long periods, an author overloads the reader's ear and fatigues his attention. In general, a writer ought to study a due mixture of long and short periods, which prevents an irksome uniformity, and entertains the mind with a variety of impressions. Long sentences cannot be properly introduced till the reader's atten-

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\* A series of short periods produces a very disagreeable effect in poetry. The subsequent quotations will justify this assertion.

Nor in the field of war  
The Greeks excel by discipline alone,  
But from their manners. Grant thy ear, O king,  
The difference learn of Grecian bands, and thine.  
The flow'r, the bulwark of thy pow'rful host  
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round  
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands  
Their painful hand to turn the fallow glebe.  
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls.  
The stubborn oak along the mountain's brow  
Sinks not beneath their stroke. With careful eyes  
They mark not how the flocks or heifers feed. *Glover.*

So saying they approached  
The gate. The centinel, soon as he heard  
Thitherward footsteps, with uplifted lance  
Challenged the darkling travellers. At their voice,  
He draws the strong bolts back, and painful turns  
The massy entrance. To the careful chiefs  
They pass. At midnight of their extreme state  
Counselling they sat, serious and stern. To them  
Comrade. Assembled warriors! &c. *Southey.*



tion is completely engaged: they ought never to be placed at the beginning of discourses of any description.

The French critics make a proper distribution of style into the two general classes of *périodique* and *coupé*. In the *style périodique*, the sentences are composed of several members linked together and depending upon each other, so that the sense is not completely unfolded till the close.

Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism; but if we could with safety indulge the pleasing supposition that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla, with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the imperial standard, with the freeborn warriors who started to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

It is well known that constitutions framed for the preservation of liberty, must consist of many parts; and that senates, popular assemblies, courts of justice, magistrates of different orders, must combine to balance each other, while they exercise, sustain, or check the executive power. If any part is struck out, the fabric must totter or fall; if any member is remiss, the others must encroach. In assemblies, constituted by men of different talents, habits, and apprehensions, it were something more than human that could make them agree in every point of importance; having different opinions and views, it were want of integrity to abstain from disputes; our very praise of unanimity, therefore, is to be considered as a danger to liberty. We wish for it at the hazard of taking in its place the remissness of men growing indifferent to the public; the venality of

those who have sold the rights of their country; or the servility of others, who give implicit obedience to a leader, by whom their minds are subdued. The love of the public, and respect to its laws, are the points on which mankind are bound to agree; but if, in matters of controversy, the sense of any individual or party is invariably pursued, the cause of freedom is already betrayed.—*Ferguson's Hist. of Civil Society.*

This is the more pompous, musical, and oratorical mode of composition.

In the *style coupé*, the sense is expressed in short independent propositions, each complete within itself.

The women, in their turn, learned to be more vain, more gay, and more alluring. They grew studious to please and to conquer. They lost somewhat of the intrepidity and fierceness which before were characteristic of them. They were to affect a delicacy and a weakness. Their education was to be an object of greater attention and care. A finer sense of beauty was to arise. They were to abandon all the employments which hurt the shape and deform the body. They were to exert a fancy in dress and ornament. They were to be more secluded from observation. A greater play was to be given to sentiment and anticipation. Greater reserve was to accompany the commerce of the sexes. Modesty was to take the alarm sooner. Gallantry, in all its fashions, and in all its charms, was to unfold itself.—*Stuart's View of Society.*

But how can these considerations consist with pride and insolence, which are repugnant to every social and virtuous sentiment? Do you, proud man! look back with complacency on the illustrious merits of your ancestors? Show yourself worthy of them by imitating their virtues, and disgrace not the name you bear by a conduct unbecoming a man. Were your progenitors such as you are fond to represent them, be assured that, if they rose from the grave, they would be ashamed of you. If they resembled yourself, you have no reason to boast of them; and wisdom will dictate to you to cultivate those manners which alone can dignify your family. Nothing can be conceived more inconsistent than to exult in illustrious ancestry, and to do what must disgrace it; than to mention with ostentation the distinguished merits of progenitors, and to exhibit a melancholy contrast to them in character. Will you maintain that, because

your forefathers were good and brave men, you are authorised to abandon the pursuit of all that is decent or respectable! For, to this sentiment, the pride of family, whenever it forms a characteristical feature, never fails to lead the mind. In a word, considered in its specific nature, and carried to its utmost extent, it lays down this maxim, "That ancestry gives a right to dishonour and degrade itself."

After all, what is high birth? Does it bestow a nature different from that of the rest of mankind? Has not the man of ancient line human blood in his veins? Does he not experience hunger and thirst? Is he not subject to disease, to accidents, and to death; and must not his body moulder in the grave as well as that of the beggar? Can he or any of his race, "redeem his brother by any means, or give God a ransom for him?" Go back only a few generations, of which the number is much smaller than you imagine it to be, and you arrive at Adam, the progenitor of us all.—*Brown's Sermons.*

This mode of writing generally suits gay and easy subjects. It is more lively and striking than the *style périodique*. According to the nature of the composition, and the general character which it ought to bear, the one or other of these may be predominant; but in every species of composition they ought to be blended with each other. By a proper mixture of short and long periods, the ear is gratified, and a certain sprightliness is joined with majesty; but when a regular compass of phrases is employed, the reader soon becomes fatigued with the monotony. A train of sentences, constructed in the same manner, and with the same number of members, whether long or short, should never be allowed to follow each other in close uninterrupted succession. Nothing is so tiresome as perpetual uniformity.

In the construction and distribution of his sentences, Lord Shaftesbury has shewn great art. It has



already been hinted, that he is often guilty of sacrificing precision of style to pomp of expression; and that his whole manner is strongly marked with a stiffness and affectation which render him very unfit to be considered as a general model. But, as his ear was fine, and as he was extremely attentive to every species of elegance, he was more studious and successful than any other English author in producing a proper intermixture of long and short sentences, with variety and harmony in their structure.

Having offered these observations with regard to sentences in general, I shall now enter upon a particular consideration of the most essential properties of a perfect sentence. These seem to be clearness and precision, unity, strength, and harmony.

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## CHAP. VII.

### OF CLEARNESS AND PRECISION IN THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

IN the arrangement of a period, as well as in the choice of words, the chief object which ought to be kept in view is perspicuity. This should never be sacrificed to any other beauty. The least degree of ambiguity ought to be avoided with the greatest care: it is a fault almost sufficient to counterbalance every beauty which an author may happen to possess. Ambiguity arises from two causes; from an improper

choice of words, or an improper collocation of them.\* The first of these causes has already been fully considered.

In the collocation of words, the first object of our attention is a rigid conformity to the rules of grammar, so far as these can guide us. But an ambiguous arrangement of words may frequently be observed where we cannot discover a transgression of any grammatical rule. The relation which the words or members of a period bear to each other, cannot be pointed out in English, as in Greek and Latin, by means of their terminations; it must be ascertained by the position in which they stand. Hence an important rule in the structure of a sentence is, that the words or members most intimately connected, should be placed as near to each other as is consistent with elegance and harmony, so that their mutual relation may be plainly perceived.

I. Ambiguities are frequently occasioned by the improper use of the adverb. This part of speech, as its name implies, is generally placed close or near to the word which it modifies or affects; and its propriety and force depend on its position. By neglecting to advert to this circumstance, writers frequently convey a different meaning from what they intend.

Sixtus the Fourth was, if I mistake not, a great collector of books at least.—*Bolingbroke on the Study of History.*

*At least*, should not be connected with *books*, but with *collector*.

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\* The reader will find this subject treated by Condillac, *Traité de l'Art d'écrire*, liv. i. chap. xi.

The Romans understood liberty, *at least*, as well as we.—*Swift on the Adv. of Religion.*

These words are susceptible of two different interpretations, according as the emphasis, in reading them, is laid upon *liberty* or *at least*. In the former case they will signify, that whatever other things we may understand better than the Romans, *liberty* at least was one thing which they understood as well as we. In the latter they will import, that liberty was understood, *at least* as well by them as by us. If this last was the author's meaning, the ambiguity would have been avoided, and the sense rendered independent of the manner of pronouncing, by arranging the words thus: "The Romans understood liberty, as well at least as we."

By greatness, I do not *only* mean the bulk of any single object, but the largeness of a whole view.—*Addison, Spectator.*

Here the position of the adverb *only*, renders it a limitation of the word *mean*; as if the author intended to say that he did something besides meaning. The ambiguity may be removed by the following arrangement: "By greatness, I do not mean the bulk of any single object only, but the largeness of a whole view."

In common conversation, the tone and emphasis which we use in pronouncing such words as *only*, *wholly*, *at least*, generally serve to shew their reference, and to render the meaning clear and obvious; and hence we acquire a habit of introducing them loosely in the course of a period. But in written discourses, which address the eye, and not the ear, greater accuracy is requisite: these adverbs should be so connected with the words which they are in-



tended to qualify, as to prevent all appearance of ambiguity.

II. Words expressing things connected in the thought, should be placed as near to each other as possible. This rule is derived immediately from the principles of human nature; in which we may discover a remarkable propensity to place together objects that are in any manner connected. When objects are arranged according to their connection, we have a sense of order: when they are placed fortuitously, we have a sense of disorder.

The connective parts of sentences are the most important of all, and require the greatest care and attention; for it is by these chiefly that the train of thought, the course of reasoning, and the whole progress of the mind, in continued discourse of all kinds, are displayed; and on the right use of these depends perspicuity, the greatest beauty of style.

The bad effect of a violent separation of words or members which are intimately connected, will appear from the following examples.

The English are naturally fanciful, and very often disposed, by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, to many wild notions and visions, to which others are not so liable.—*Addison, Spectator.*

Here the verb *disposed* is, by a long clause, violently separated from the subject to which it refers. This harsh construction is the less excusable, as the fault is easily prevented by the following arrangement: "The English are naturally fanciful, and by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, are often disposed to many



wild notions and visions, to which others are not so liable."

Farnese was, notwithstanding these circumstances, determined to employ his troops in reducing it, by loud complaints which were made to him of the continual depredations of the garrison.—*Watson's Hist. of Philip II.*

The general was determined by loud complaints: but the sentence is so unskillfully constructed that this meaning may not at once be obvious to every reader.

No mortal author, in the ordinary fate and vicissitude of things, knows to what use his works may, some time or other, be applied.—*Spectator.*

It cannot be impertinent or ridiculous therefore, in such a country, whatever it might be in the Abbot of St. Real's, which was Savoy I think; or in Peru, under the Incas, where Garcilaso de la Vega says it was lawful for none but the nobility to study; for men of all degrees to instruct themselves in those affairs wherein they may be actors, or judges of those that act, or controllers of those that judge.—*Bolingbroke on the Study of History.*

If Scipio, who was naturally given to women, for which anecdote we have, if I mistake not, the authority of Polybius, as well as some verses of Nævius, preserved by Aulus Gellius, had been educated by Olympias at the court of Philip, it is improbable that he would have restored the beautiful Spaniard.—*Ibid.*

May we not conjecture, for it is but conjecture, something more! —*Bolingbroke's Dissert. on Parties.*

The works of Lord Bolingbroke abound with improper arrangements of this kind.

They perceiving the nuncio to be more solicitous about the interests of the Roman court, than the tranquillity of the empire, or purity of the church, remained silent.—*Robertson's Hist. of Charles V.*

The structure of the sentence would be greatly improved by the transposition of a single word: "Perceiving the nuncio to be more solicitous about the

interests of the Roman court, than the tranquillity of the empire, or purity of the church, they remained silent."

The preceding rule is very frequently transgressed in the disposition of pronouns. The relative *who* or *which*, when introduced in order to avoid the repetition of the name of some person or thing, ought always to be placed as near as possible to the name of that person or thing. Where it is out of its proper place, we constantly find something awkward or disjointed in the structure of the sentence.

This kind of wit was very much in vogue among our countrymen, about an age or two ago, who did not practise it for any oblique reason, but purely for the sake of being witty.—*Addison, Spectator*.

In this sentence the meaning is sufficiently obvious; but the construction would evidently be improved by disposing of the circumstance, "about an age or two ago," in such a manner as not to separate the relative *who* from its antecedent *countrymen*. "About an age or two ago, this kind of wit was very much in vogue among our countrymen, who did not practise it for any oblique reason, but purely for the sake of being witty."

It is folly to pretend to arm ourselves against the accidents of life, by heaping up treasures, *which* nothing can protect us against, but the good providence of our heavenly father.—*Sherlock's Sermons*.

This construction implies, that it is *treasures*, and not the *accidents of life*, from which no mortal can protect himself by his own exertions. The sentence ought to have stood thus: "It is folly to pretend, by heaping up treasures, to arm ourselves against the

accidents of life, against which nothing can protect us, but the good providence of our heavenly father."

Thus I have fairly given you, Sir, my own opinion, as well as that of a great majority of both houses here, relating to this weighty affair, upon which I am confident you may securely reckon.—*Swift on the Sacramental Test.*

Here the author seems to advise his correspondent to reckon upon this weighty affair; though he certainly meant that it was the great majority upon which he might reckon. The obscurity will be removed by arranging the sentence thus: "Thus, Sir, I have fairly given you my own opinion relating to this weighty affair, as well as that of a great majority of both houses here; upon which I am confident you may securely reckon."

I allude to the article BLIND in the Encyclopædia Britannica, published at Edinburgh in the year 1783, which was written by him. *Mackenzie's Life of Blacklock.*

This arrangement leaves us to suppose that Dr Blacklock was the sole author of a book to which he only contributed an essay on blindness. His biographer's meaning might have been expressed thus: "I allude to the article BLIND, which was written by him, and in the year 1783 published at Edinburgh in the Encyclopædia Britannica."

We no where meet with a more glorious and pleasing shew in nature, than what appears in the heavens at the rising and setting of the sun, which is wholly made up of those different strains of light, that shew themselves in clouds of a different situation.—*Addison, Spectator.*

Which is here designed to connect with the word *shew* as its antecedent; but it is removed to such a dis-



tance, that without a careful attention to the sense, we should be led, by the rules of syntax, to refer it to the rising and setting of the sun, or to the sun itself. Hence an indistinctness is thrown over the whole sentence.

From a habit of saving time and paper, *which* they acquired at the university, they write in so diminutive a manner, with such frequent blots and interlineations, that they are hardly able to go on without perpetual hesitation, or extemporary expletives.—*Swift's Letter to a Young Gentleman.*

The author certainly does not mean that the clergymen of whom he speaks, had acquired time and paper at the university, but that they had there acquired a habit of saving time and paper. The sentence ought to have run thus: "From a habit which they have acquired at the university of saving time and paper, they write in so diminutive a manner, with such frequent blots," &c.

III. Another great source of ambiguity is the too frequent repetition of pronouns, when we have occasion to refer to different persons. The subsequent examples will serve to illustrate this observation.

*They* were summoned occasionally by *their* kings, when compelled by *their* wants and by *their* fears to have recourse to *their* aid.—*Robertson's View of Society.*

Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others, and think that *their* reputation obscures *them*, and that *their* commendable qualities do stand in *their* light: and therefore *they* do what *they* can to cast a cloud over *them*, that the bright shining of *their* virtues may not obscure *them*.—*Tillotson's Sermons.*

The earl of Falmouth and Mr. Coventry were rivals, *who* should have most influence with the duke, *who* loved the earl best, but thought the other the wiser man, *who* supported Pen, *who* disobliged all the courtiers, even against the earl, *who* contemned Pen as a fellow of no sense.—*Clarendon's Continuation.*

All which with the king's and queen's so ample promises to *him* (the treasurer) so few hours before the conferring the place on another, and the duke of York's manner of receiving *him* (the treasurer) after *he* (the chancellor) had been shut up with *him* (the duke) as *he* (the treasurer) was informed, might very well excuse *him* (the treasurer) from thinking *he* (the chancellor) had some share in the affront *he* (the treasurer) had undergone.—*Ibid.*

Of these sentences, the first three are not involved in much obscurity, though they are certainly disagreeable and inelegant; but the last cannot possibly be understood without a careful recollection of the contents of several pages preceding.

IV. A circumstance ought never to be placed between two capital members of a period; for by such an arrangement, we are left doubtful to which of the two the circumstance refers. But when it is interjected between parts of the member to which it properly belongs, the ambiguity is removed, and the members are kept distinct from each other.

Let the virtue of a definition be what it will, *in the order of things*, it seems rather to follow than to precede our enquiry, of which it ought to be considered as the result.—*Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

This arrangement leaves us dubious, whether the clause, "in the order of things," refers to what precedes or to what follows. The ambiguity may be thus removed: "Let the virtue of a definition be what it will, it seems, in the order of things, rather to follow than to precede our enquiry, of which it ought to be considered as the result."

The knight, seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, *upon the death of his mother*, ordered all the apartments to be flung open, and exorcised by his chaplain.—*Addison, Spectator.*

This may either imply, that upon the death of his mother, the knight was shut out of his own house, or that upon the death of his mother, he ordered all his apartments to be exorcised. As the latter was the author's meaning, the sentence ought to have stood thus: "Seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, the knight, upon the death of his mother, ordered all the apartments to be flung open, and exorcised by his chaplain."

Though our brother is upon the rack, *as long as we ourselves are at ease*, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers.—*Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.*

Better thus: "Though our brother is upon the rack, our senses, *as long as we ourselves are at ease*, will never inform us of what he suffers."

This work in its full extent, *being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the power of life gradually declining*, he had no longer courage to undertake.—*Johnson's Life of Savage.*

This construction would lead us to conclude that it was the work, and not the poet, that was afflicted with an asthma. The following arrangement removes the ambiguity: "Being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake this work in its full extent."

Since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, *where fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no law to punish it*, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage.—*Swift's Travels of Gulliver.*

This arrangement conveys the idea that people "deal

upon credit" in those places only "where fraud is permitted." The ambiguity might have been avoided by the insertion of a few additional syllables. "Since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, *the consequence is, that* where fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no law to punish it, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage."

The minister who grows less by his elevation, *like a statue on a mighty pedestal*, will always have his jealousy strong about him.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

This construction leaves it doubtful whether the object introduced by way of simile, relates to the subsequent or to the preceding clause. Better thus: "The minister who, like a statue placed on a mighty pedestal, grows less by his elevation, will always have his jealousy strong about him."

Instead of being able to employ troops trained to skill in arms, and to military subordination, *by regular discipline*, monarchs were obliged to depend on such forces as their vassals conducted to their standard in consequence of their military tenures.—*Robertson's View of Society.*

Here the author's meaning is sufficiently obvious; yet, from the construction, we might conclude that a little regular discipline had been administered to monarchs, in order to make them depend on such forces as their vassals conducted to their standard. The sentence may be thus arranged: "Instead of being able to employ troops trained, by regular discipline, to skill in arms, and to military subordination, monarchs were obliged to depend on such forces as their



vassals conducted to their standard in consequence of their military tenures."

We shall now endeavour, *with clearness and precision*, to describe the provinces once united under their sway.—*Gibbon's History of the Roman Empire.*

The following arrangement removes this ambiguity :  
" We shall now endeavour to describe with clearness and precision the provinces once united under their sway."

In the course of a certain examination which took place in the House of Commons in the year 1809, " Mr. Dennis Browne said, the witness had been ordered to withdraw from the bar, *in consequence of being intoxicated, by the motion of an honourable member.*" This remark, as might have been expected, produced loud and general peals of laughter. The speaker intended to say that, " in consequence of being intoxicated, the witness, by the motion of an honourable member, had been ordered to withdraw from the bar."

Perhaps it may be thought that some of the preceding objections are too scrupulous, and that the defect of perspicuity is easily supplied by accurate punctuation. It may indeed be granted that punctuation will sometimes remove an ambiguity; but it can never produce that peculiar beauty which is perceived when the sense is clearly and distinctly unfolded by means of a happy arrangement. Such influence does this beauty possess, that, by a natural transition of perception, it is communicated to the very sound of the words, so as apparently to improve the music of the period.

Having now considered the principal circumstances which contribute to perspicuity, and the various modes in which the laws relating to it may be transgressed, I shall conclude the subject by enquiring whether it be possible that this essential quality of style may be carried to excess.

It has been alleged that too much perspicuity has a tendency to cloy the reader, and that it becomes irksome, by affording no opportunity of exertion to the rational powers of the mind. This objection arises from the error of confounding two dissimilar objects, the common and the clear, and thence very naturally their contraries, the new and the obscure. If we entertain our reader solely or chiefly with thoughts which are either trite or obvious, he will soon be filled with languor and disgust: we present no uncommon images or sentiments to his mind, we give him little or no information, and consequently afford neither exercise to his reason, nor entertainment to his fancy. In what we read and what we hear, we always expect to find something with which we were formerly unacquainted; and when this expectation is disappointed, we discover nothing to repay our attention. We are soon disgusted with such a trifling minuteness of narration, description, or argument, as an ordinary apprehension renders superfluous. The reason is, not that any thing is said with too much perspicuity, but that many things are said of which no person is ignorant. Thus, when Quintus Curtius had informed us that the shouts of the Macedonian army were reverberated by the cliffs of the mountains, and the vast forests, it was certainly very unnecessary to add, "quippe semper cir-

cumjecta nemora petraëque, quantamcumque accipere vocem, multiplicato sono referunt." Reasons that are known to every one, ought to be taken for granted: to express them is childish, and interrupts the narration.

The practice of collecting trite maxims and common-place sentiments is finely ridiculed in an essay of Swift's, from which I shall select one passage: "All rivers go to the sea, but none return from it. Xerxes wept when he beheld his army; to consider that in less than an hundred years they would be all dead. Anacreon was choked with a grape-stone; and violent joy kills as well as violent grief. There is nothing constant in this world but inconstancy; yet Plato thought, that if Virtue would appear in the world in her own native dress, all men would be enamoured with her. But now, since interest governs the world, and men neglect the golden mean, Jupiter himself, if he came on earth, would be despised, unless it were as he did to Danaë, in a golden shower. For men, now-a-days, worship the rising sun, and not the setting."\*

It is futility in the thought, and not perspicuity in the language, which constitutes the fault of such performances as those to which I have alluded. There is as little hazard that a composition shall be faulty in the latter respect, as that a mirror shall be too faithful in reflecting the images of objects, or that the glasses of a telescope shall be too transparent. At the same time, it is not to be dissembled that,

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\* Swift's *Trritical Essay upon the Faculties of the Mind*.



with inattentive readers, darkness frequently passes for depth. On the contrary, to be perspicuous, and to be superficial, are regarded by them as synonymous. But it is not surely to their absurd notions that our language ought to be adapted.

Before I dismiss this subject, it may however be proper to observe that every species of composition does not admit of an equal degree of perspicuity. In the sublime ode, for example, it is impossible, or at least very difficult, to reconcile the utmost perspicuity with that force and vivacity which are indispensably requisite in such performances. But even in this case, though the genius of the higher species of lyric poetry may render obscurity to a certain degree excusable, nothing can ever constitute it a positive excellence.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### OF UNITY IN THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

IN compositions of every description, a certain degree of unity is absolutely requisite. There must always be some leading principle to form a chain of connexion between the component parts. In single sentences, which are members of a composition, the same principle must also be predominant.

#### I. Objects that have no intimate connexion should

never be crowded into one sentence. A sentence or period ought to express one entire thought or mental proposition; and different thoughts ought to be separated in the expression, by being placed in different periods. It is improper to connect in language things which are separated in reality. Of errors against this rule I shall produce a few examples.

Cato died in the full vigour of life, under fifty; he was naturally warm and affectionate in his temper; comprehensive, impartial, and strongly possessed with the love of mankind.—*Ferguson's Hist. of the Roman Republic.*

If the author was determined to connect the statement of Cato's death with an account of his character, he might have preserved the unity of the sentence by such an arrangement as the following: "Cato, who died in the full vigour of life, under the age of fifty, was naturally warm and affectionate in his temper."

In this uneasy state, both of his public and private life, Cicero was oppressed by a new and cruel affliction, the death of his beloved Tullia; which happened soon after her divorce from Dolabella, whose manners and humours were entirely disagreeable to her.—*Middleton's Life of Cicero.*

The principal object in this sentence, is the death of Tullia, which was the cause of her father's affliction. The time when the event took place is, without any impropriety, pointed out in the course of the sentence; but the subjunction of Dolabella's character is foreign to the main object. It breaks the unity and compactness of the period, by presenting a new picture to the reader.

He is supposed to have fallen, by his father's death, into the hands of his uncle, a vintner, near Charing Cross, who sent him for

some time to Dr. Busby, at Westminster; but not intending to give him any education beyond that of the school, took him, when he was well advanced in literature, to his own house, where the earl of Dorset, celebrated for patronage of genius, found him by chance, as Burnet relates, reading Horace, and was so well pleased with his proficiency, that he undertook the care and cost of his academical education.—*Johnson's Life of Prior.*

This single sentence contains no inconsiderable number of the particulars which are known with regard to the personal history of Prior. He is conducted from the house of his father to that of his uncle; sent to Westminster school, where he makes considerable progress in literature; is taken from school, and remains at his uncle's; obtains the patronage of the earl of Dorset, who, if Burnet may be credited, found him reading Horace; and, last of all, is about to be sent to the university, under the protection of that nobleman.

The usual acceptation takes profit and pleasure for two different things, and not only calls the followers or votaries of them by several names of busy and idle men, but distinguishes the faculties of the mind that are conversant about them, calling the operations of the first wisdom, and of the other wit, which is a Saxon word, that is used to express what the Spaniards and Italians call *ingenio*, and the French *esprit*, both from the Latin; but I think wit more peculiarly signifies that of poetry, as may occur upon remarks on the Runic language.—*Temple on Poetry.*

Before the writer arrives at the close of this sentence, he seems to have forgotten what he set out with inculcating.

A right honourable author, having had occasion to mention the influence of the sun, expatiates in the following manner:

It breaks the icy fetters of the main, where vast sea-monsters

pierce through floating islands, with arms that can withstand the crystal rock; whilst others, who of themselves seem great as islands, are by their bulk alone armed against all but man, whose superiority over creatures of such size and force should make him mindful of his privilege of reason, and force him humbly to adore the great composer of these wondrous frames, and the author of his own superior wisdom.—*Shaftesbury's Moralists*.

At the commencement of this sentence, the sun is introduced breaking the icy fetters of the main; the sun is succeeded by sea-monsters piercing through floating islands *with their arms*; and after these have played their part, man is brought into view, to receive a long and serious admonition.

To this succeeded that licentiousness which entered with the Restoration, and from infecting our religion and morals, fell to corrupt our language: which last was not like to be much improved by those who at that time made up the court of King Charles the Second; either such who had followed him in his banishment, or who had been altogether conversant in the dialect of those fanatic times; or young men, who had been educated in the same company; so that the court, which used to be the standard of propriety and correctness of speech, was then, and I think hath ever since continued, the worst school in England for that accomplishment; and so will remain till better care be taken in the education of our young nobility; that they may set out into the world with some foundation of literature, in order to qualify them for patterns of politeness.—*Swift on the English Tongue*.

How many different facts, reasonings, and observations, are here presented to the mind!

Authors who are fond of long periods, very frequently commit similar errors; and in order to verify this assertion, we need only inspect the historical works of Lord Clarendon and Bishop Burnet. Even in later and more correct writers, we sometimes find a period extending to such a length, and compre-



hending so many particulars, as more justly to deserve the appellation of a discourse than of a sentence. But heterogeneous particulars may occasionally be crowded into periods of no uncommon length. The following quotations will illustrate this observation.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant; also our bed is green.—*Song of Solomon.*

His own notions were always good; but he was a man of great expence.—*Burnet's Hist. of his own Time.*

I single him out among the moderns, because he had the foolish presumption to censure Tacitus, and to write history himself; and your lordship will forgive this short excursion in honour of a favourite author.—*Bolingbroke on the Study of History.*

The death of Constantine was imputed to poison; and his son Romanus, who derived that name from his maternal grandfather, ascended the throne of Constantinople.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

In serious composition, words conveying physical and moral ideas, unconnected with each other, ought never to be forced into an artificial union.

Abnegat, inceptoque et sedibus hæret in isdem.

*Virgil. Æneid. ii. 654.*

Tunc nec mens mihi, nec color

Certa sede manet.—*Horat. Carm. i. xiii. 5.*

Una atque eadem nox erat, qua prætor amoris turpissimæ flamma, ac classis populi Romani prædonum incendio conflagrabat.—*Cicero in Verrem, v. 35.*

De civitate maluit quam de sententia dimoveri.—*Cicero pro Sextio, 47.*

Germania omnis a Gallis, Rhætisque et Pannoniis, Rheno et Danubio fluminibus, a Sarmatis Dacisque mutuo metu aut montibus separatur.—*Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum, cap. i.*

The alliance of Chosroes, king of Armenia and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Persian cavalry was of little service, opened a secure entrance into the heart of Media.—*Gibbon's History of the Roman Empire.*

On every side they rose in multitudes, armed with the rustic weapons, and with irresistible fury.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

A conspiracy was formed; the day, place, and signal were determined, upon which the Parthenie and Helots, armed with concealed daggers, and with the most hostile fury, should retaliate, in the public assembly, their past sufferings and insults on the unsuspecting superiority of the proud lords of Sparta.—*Gillies's Hist. of Greece.*

But when an author wishes to place some object in a ludicrous point of view, a combination of this kind may have a good effect.

And let not Bardolph's vital thread be cut  
With edge of penny-cord, and vile reproach.

*Shakspeare.*

On l'a donc délivrée sur le champ et de la fosse et de toutes ses appréhensions.—*Hamilton, Quatre Facardins.*

After much patience, and many a wistful look, Pennant started up, seized the wig, and threw it into the fire. It was in flames in a moment, and so was the officer, who ran to his sword.—*Walpoliana.*

He is surely much happier in this noble condescension, and must acquire a more perfect knowledge of mankind, than if he kept himself aloof from his subjects, continually wrapt up in his own importance and imperial fur.—*Moore's View of Society in France.*

She even believed that a journey would prove a remedy for her asthmatic complaints; her desire of a matrimonial establishment was full as efficacious as the vinegar of Hannibal, and the Alps melted before it.—*Hayley's Essay on Old Maids.*

Mr. Dannel and Mrs. Albery, who neither of them, at any time, took the smallest notice of what she said, passed on, and left the whole weight both of her person and her complaints to Camilla.—*D'Arblay's Camilla.*

II. Parentheses ought never to be introduced in the middle of sentences; and indeed the unity and the beauty of a period can seldom or never be complete where they are introduced in any situation. They are in general nothing more than a perplexed and awkward method of disposing of some thought

which the writer wants art to introduce in its proper place. It is not however sufficient to omit the usual marks of a parenthesis, but the sentence must be so constructed as to render them inadmissible; for, as Dr. Whately remarks, "it is no cure to a lame man, to take away his crutches."\* In poetical composition, parentheses may occasionally be admitted with happy effect; but if they are long or frequent, they will be found still more disagreeable than in prose. The pages of Churchill, who displays a strong but rude vein of poetry, are entangled with innumerable parentheses.

It seems to me, that in order to maintain the moral system of the world at a certain point far below that of ideal perfection, (for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining) but, however sufficient upon the whole to constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst tolerable; I say, it seems to me, that the author of nature has thought fit to mingle from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of the ethereal spirit than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men.—*Bottingbroke's Spirit of Patriotism*.

Into this sentence, by means of a parenthesis, and other interjected circumstances, the author has con-

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\* Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric*, p. 251.—Dr. Paley related the following anecdote of Bishop Law. "He is very fond of parentheses in the structure of his sentences; he will set a pair of hooks at a great distance one from the other, and then have another little parenthesis in the belly of that. He had a book printed at Carlisle; they were a long time about it: he sent several times to hasten them; at last he called himself to know the reason of the delay. 'Why does not my book make its appearance?' said he to the printer. 'My Lord, I am extremely sorry; but we have been obliged to send to Glasgow for a pound of parentheses.'" (Best's *Personal and Literary Memorials*, p. 196. Lond. 1829, 8vo.)

trived to thrust so many particulars, that he is obliged to have recourse to the sorry phrase, *I say*, the occurrence of which may always be regarded as an infallible mark of a clumsy and unskilful construction. Such a phrase may be excusable in conversation, but in polished writings it is altogether unpardonable.

The most astonishing instance of this respect, so frequently paid to Nothing, is when it is paid (if I may so express myself) to something less than Nothing; when the person who receives it is not only void of the qualities for which he is respected, but is in reality notoriously guilty of vices directly opposite to the virtues, whose applause he receives. This is indeed the highest degree of Nothing, or (if I may be allowed the word) the nothingest of all Nothings.—*Fielding's Essay on Nothing.*

Here the effect of the author's wit would be rendered more powerful by the omission of these qualifying parentheses. Instead of pointing the sentiment, they have a quite opposite tendency. In compositions of this kind, no apology need be offered for such expressions as Fielding has employed.

The subsequent quotations will further illustrate the disagreeable effect of parentheses.

It was an ancient tradition, that when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over boundaries, and was represented, according to the fashion of that age, by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself.—*Gibbon's Hist. of the Roman Empire.*

The description Ovid gives of his situation, in that first period of his existence, seems (some poetical embellishments excepted) such as, were we to reason *a priori*, we should conclude he was placed in.—*Lancaster's Essay on Delicacy.*

When this parliament sate down, (for it deserves our particular observation that both houses were full of zeal for the present government, and of resentment against the late usurpations) there was but one party in parliament; and no other party could raise its head in the nation.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

It will, therefore, be very reasonable to allow on their account as much as, added to the losses of the conqueror, may amount to a million of deaths, and then we shall see this conqueror, the oldest we have on the records of history (though, as we have observed before, the chronology of these remote times is extremely uncertain) opening the scene by a destruction of at least one million of his species, unprovoked but by his ambition, without any motives but pride, cruelty, and madness, and without any benefit to himself (for Justin expressly tells us, he did not maintain his conquests), but solely to make so many people, or so many distant countries, feel experimentally, how severe a scourge Providence intends for the human race, when he gives one man the power over many, and arms his naturally impotent and feeble rage with the hands of millions, who know no common principle of action but a blind obedience to the passions of their ruler.—*Burke's Vindication of Natural Society.*

This work is professedly written in imitation of Lord Bolingbroke's style and manner.

III. Sentences ought never to be extended beyond what seems their natural close. It need not here be observed that, according to the laws of rhetoric, a sentence unfinished is no sentence. But we frequently meet with sentences which may be said to be more than finished: when we have arrived at what we expected was to be their conclusion, some circumstance which ought to have been omitted, or to have been otherwise disposed of, suddenly presents itself. Such appendages tend very much to destroy the beauty, and to diminish the strength of a period.

And here it was often found of absolute necessity to enflame or cool the passions of the audience; especially at Rome, where Tully spoke, and with whose writings young divines (I mean those among them who read old authors) are more conversant than with those of Demosthenes, who, by many degrees, excelled the other; at least as an orator.—*Swift's Letter to a young Gentleman.*



This is as weak a sentence as could easily be written; but without endeavouring to point out the whole of its deformity, I shall only advert to the circumstance for which it is here introduced. The natural close of the period is at the last semicolon, and when we have proceeded thus far, we expect no additional information; but the halting clause, "at least as an orator," is unexpectedly intruded upon us.

Speaking of Dr. Burnet and Fontenelle:

The first could not end his learned treatise without a panegyric of modern learning and knowledge in comparison of the ancient; and the other falls so grossly into the censure of the old poetry, and preference of the new, that I could not read either of these strains without indignation, which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as sufficiency, the worst composition out of the pride and ignorance of mankind.—*Temple on Ancient and Modern Learning.*

Of this sentence the word *indignation* forms the natural conclusion: what follows is foreign to the proposition with which the author began.

All the world acknowledgeth the *Æneid* to be most perfect in its kind; and considering the disadvantage of the language, and the severity of the Roman Muse, the poem is still more wonderful; since, without the liberty of the Grecian poets, the diction is so great and noble, so clear, so forcible and expressive, so chaste and pure, that even all the strength and compass of the Greek tongue, joined to Homer's fire, cannot give us stronger and clearer ideas, than the great Virgil has set before our eyes; some few instances excepted, in which Homer, through the force of genius, hath excelled.—*Felton's Dissertation on the Classics.*

The circumstance so ungracefully appended to this sentence might be disposed of in the following manner: "All the world acknowledgeth, &c. that, with the exception of some few instances in which Homer, through the force of genius, hath excelled, even all



the strength and compass of the Greek tongue, joined to Homer's fire, cannot give us stronger and clearer ideas, than the great Virgil hath set before our eyes."

By way of appendix to this chapter, we may remark that it is improper to begin a sentence in such a loose manner as appears in the following examples,

As nothing damps or depresses the spirits like great subjection or slavery, either of body or mind; so nothing nourishes, revives, and fortifies them like great liberty. *Which* may possibly enter among other reasons, of what has been observed about long life being found more in England, than in others of our neighbouring countries.—*Temple on Health and Long Life*

For this end I propose to-morrow to set out a week's task to my labourers, and accept your invitation, if Dion thinks good. *To which* I gave consent.—*Berkeley's Minute Philosopher.*

So far they oblige, and no farther; their authority being wholly founded on that permission and adoption. *In which* we are not singular in our notions.—*Blackstone's Commentaries.*

I think it convenient to endeavour, if possible, to remove a violent, and I think, unreasonable prejudice which men have received against all those who endeavour to make religion reasonable. *As if* Bellarmine had been in the right, when he said that faith was rather to be defined by ignorance than by knowledge.—*Tillotson's Sermons.*

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## CHAP. IX.

### OF STRENGTH IN THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

THE strength of a sentence consists in such a disposition of its several words and members, as may tend most powerfully to impress the mind of the

reader with the meaning which the author wishes to convey. To the production of this effect the qualities of perspicuity and unity are absolutely requisite; but they are not of themselves sufficient. For a sentence may be possessed of perspicuity and unity, and yet, by some unfavourable circumstance in its structure, may be destitute of that strength or vivacity of expression which a more happy arrangement would have produced.

I. A sentence ought to be divested of all redundant words. These may sometimes be consistent with perspicuity and unity, but they are always irreconcilable with strength. It is an invariable maxim, that words which add nothing to the sense, or to the clearness, must diminish the force of the expression.

Although the effect fell short of what is ascribed to fabulous legislators and founders of states, yet to none ever were ascribed more tokens of magnanimity and greatness of mind.—*Ferguson's Hist. of the Roman Republic.*

What is the difference between magnanimity and greatness of mind?

I look upon it as *my duty*, so far as God hath enabled me, and as long as I keep within the bounds of truth, *of duty*, and of decency. *Swift's Letters.*

It would certainly be very strange if any man should think it his duty to transgress the bounds of duty.

How many are there by whom these tidings of good news were never heard.—*Bolingbroke's Essays.*

This is tidings of tidings, or news of news.

He says nothing of it himself, and I am not disposed to travel into the regions of conjecture, but to relate a narrative of facts.—*Disney's Memoirs of Jortin.*

This is equivalent to relating a relation, or narrating a narrative.

Never did Atticus succeed better in gaining the *universal* love and esteem of all men.—*Spectator*.

This is so clear a proposition, that I might rest the *whole* argument entirely upon it.—*Lyttelton on the Conversion of St. Paul*.

One of the two words printed in Italics may be considered as redundant. In the subsequent passage, Lord Lyttelton employs a greater superfluity of words: four of them may be rejected without any detriment to the significancy of the period.

I shall suppose then, in order to try to account for the vision without a miracle, that as Saul and his company were journeying *along in their way* to Damascus, an extraordinary meteor really did happen.—*Ibid*.

I went home, full of a *great many* serious reflections.—*Guardian*.

Was it not sufficient to inform us that he went home *full* of serious reflections?

Lord Essex had got into a set of *some* strange principles.—*Burnet's Hist. of his own Time*.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that the word *some* makes no addition to the significancy of this short period.

They languish under *misfortunes*, of mind or body, or *fortune*, which no care or caution was capable of preventing.—*Balguy on the Divine Benevolence*.

This may rather be considered as an ungraceful repetition, than as a redundant expression; but it is at least evident that the form of the sentence is very exceptionable.

We may here observe that a principal cause of languid verbosity is the injudicious use of adjectives

and epithets. When used sparingly and with judgment, they have a powerful influence in enlivening the expression; but nothing has more of an opposite effect than a profusion of them. When scattered with too liberal a hand, they lengthen the sentence, without adding proportionate vigour; they betray a violent effort to say something great or uncommon. A profusion of this kind is one of the principal faults in the rich and elegant style of Gibbon. The style of Dr. Gillies, a writer of talents and learning, is evidently formed on the model of that celebrated historian, and exhibits too faithful a copy of its worst qualities.

Adjectives however are not always to be regarded as mere epithets. Whatever is necessary for ascertaining the import of either a noun or a verb, whether by adding to the sense, or by limiting it, is something more than an epithet, according to the common acceptation of that term. Thus when I say "the glorious sun," the word *glorious* is an epithet; it expresses a quality which, being conceived always to belong to the object, is, like all other qualities, comprehended in the name. But when I say "the meridian sun," the word *meridian* is not barely an epithet; it makes a real addition to the signification, by denoting the sun to be in the altitude which he always reaches at noon.—A similar distinction is to be made between adverbs that are absolutely necessary for the expression of an idea, and those which are introduced for the sole purpose of embellishment.

II. A sentence ought also to be divested of all re-

dundant members. Every member should present a new thought. Yet we sometimes meet with periods in which the last member is nothing more than the echo of the first, or a repetition of it in a different form.

The very first discovery of it strikes the mind with inward joy, and spreads delight through all its faculties.—*Addison, Spectator.*

It is impossible for us to behold the divine works with coldness or indifference, or to survey so many beauties, without a secret satisfaction and complacency.—*Ibid.*

In both these instances, little or nothing is added by the second member of the sentence to what was already expressed in the first.

Neither is any condition of life more honourable in the sight of God than another, otherwise he would be a respecter of persons, which he assures us he is not.—*Swift's Sermon on Mutual Subjection.*

It is evident that this last clause does not a little enervate the thought, as it implies but too plainly, that without this assurance from God himself, we might conceive him to be of a character different from what is here represented by the preacher.

III. In constructing a sentence, particular attention should be paid to the use of copulatives, relatives, and all the particles employed in transition and connexion. The gracefulness and strength of a period must in a great measure depend on words of this description. They are the joints and hinges upon which all sentences turn. The various modes of using them are so numerous, that no particular rules respecting them can be formed; we must be directed by an attentive consideration of the practice of standard writers, joined with frequent trials of the



different effects produced by a different application of those particles. Without pretending to exhaust the subject, I shall here collect a few observations which seem to be of some importance.

What is called splitting of particles, or separating a preposition from the noun which it governs, ought always to be avoided.

As the strength of our cause doth not depend *upon*, so neither is it to be decided *by*, any critical points of history, chronology, or language.—*Berkeley's Minute Philosopher*.

Socrates was invited *to*, and Euripides entertained *at*, his court.—*Leland's History of Philip*.

In such instances, we feel some degree of pain from the revulsion, or violent separation of two things which, by their nature, should be closely united. We are obliged to rest for some time on the preposition itself, which bears no significancy, till it is joined to its proper substantive noun.

Some writers needlessly multiply demonstrative particles, by the frequent use of such phraseology as this: "*There is nothing which* disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language." In introducing a subject, or laying down a proposition to which we demand particular attention, this phraseology is very proper. But in the ordinary current of discourse, it is better to express ourselves more simply and briefly: "Nothing disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language."

On the other hand, the relative pronouns are frequently omitted, when the author thinks his meaning may be understood without them.

The faith he professed, and which he became an apostle of, was not his invention.—*Lyttelton on the Conversion of St. Paul*.

The following arrangement seems more consistent with strength as well as elegance : “ The faith *which* he professed, and of which he became an apostle, was not his invention.”

It appears that numbers of the officers and soldiers in the camp of Lepidus were prepared for the part (which) they were to act on this occasion.—*Ferguson's Hist. of the Roman Republic.*

The sole evidence (which) we can have of the veracity of a historian consists in such collateral documents as are palpable to all, and can admit of no falsification.—*Pinkerton's Essay on Medals.*

Though this elliptical style be intelligible, and may be allowed in conversation and epistolary writing, yet in all compositions of a serious or dignified kind, it is unbecoming, except where we have occasional recourse to it, merely for the sake of avoiding the too frequent recurrence of *who* or *which*.

With regard to the copulative particle *and*, several observations are to be made. It is evident that the unnecessary repetition of it enfeebles style, and produces an effect similar to that of the vulgar phrase *and so*, which occurs so frequently in common conversation.

The academy set up by Cardinal Richelieu, to amuse the wits of that age *and* country, *and* divert them from raking into his politics *and* ministry, brought this in vogue ; *and* the French wits have for this last age been in a manner wholly turned to the refinement of their language, *and* indeed with such success, that it can hardly be excelled, *and* runs equally through their verse *and* their prose.—*Temple on Poetry.*

*And* then those who are of an inferior condition, that they labour *and* be diligent in the work of an honest calling, for this is privately good *and* profitable unto men, *and* to their families ; *and* those who are above this necessity, *and* are in better capacity to maintain good works properly so called, works of piety, *and* charity, *and* justice ; that they be careful to promote *and* advance them, according to their

power and opportunity, because these things are publicly good and beneficial to mankind.—*Tillotson's Sermons.*

In the first of these sentences, the conjunction is seven times introduced; in the last, eleven times.

A redundancy of copulatives may be proper upon some occasions.

Dining one day at an alderman's in the city, Peter observed him expatiating after the manner of his brethren, in the praises of his sirloin of beef. "Beef (said the sage magistrate) is the king of meat. Beef comprehends in it the quintessence of partridge, and quail, and venison, and pheasant, and plumb-pudding, and custard."—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

Here the repetition of the conjunction is sufficiently characteristic of the drowsy speaker.

The army was composed of Grecians, and Carians, and Lycians, and Pamphilians, and Phrygians.

A leisurely survey, which is promoted by the use of so many copulatives, makes the parts seem more numerous than they would appear on a hasty inspection. In the latter case, the army is viewed as one distinct group; in the former, we seem to take an accurate review of the respective troops of each nation.

These are instances in which a multiplicity of conjunctions may be used with propriety; but it is also to be observed, that the total omission of them often produces a good effect. Longinus remarks, that it animates a period to drop the copulative;\* and he produces the following example from Xenophon: "Closing their shields, they were impelled,

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\* Longinus de Sublimitate, § xix.

they fought, they slew, they were slain.”\* I shall quote an instance of the same kind from Cæsar: “Our men, having discharged their javelins, attack with sword in hand; on a sudden the cavalry make their appearance behind; other bodies of men are seen drawing near; the enemies turn their backs; the horsemen meet them in their flight; a great slaughter ensues.”† From these observations it will appear, that an attention to the several cases when it is proper to omit, and when to redouble the copulative, is of considerable importance to all those who study eloquence. The critics both of ancient and modern times have thought the subject worthy of their notice.

IV. In arranging a sentence, the most important words ought to be placed in that situation in which they will make the strongest impression. Every one must perceive that in all sentences there are certain words of superior importance; and it is equally obvious that those words should stand in a conspicuous and distinguished place. But the precise station which they ought to occupy, cannot be ascertained by any general rule; their position must vary with the nature of the sentence. Perspicuity must ever be studied in the first place; and the structure of our language allows no great liberty in the choice of

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\* Xenophon. *Historia Græca*, lib. iv. cap. iii. 19. edit. Schneider. The very same passage occurs in his encomium of Agesilaus, cap. ii. 12.

† Cæsar de Bello Gallico, lib. vii.

collocation. For the most part, the important words are placed at the beginning of the sentence; as in the following examples:

A modern Italian is distinguished by sensibility, quickness, and art, while he employs on trifles the capacity of an ancient Roman; and exhibits now, in the scene of amusement, and in search of a frivolous applause, that fire, and those passions, with which Gracchus burned in the forum, and shook the assemblies of a severer people.—*Ferguson's Hist. of Civil Society.*

The state of society, which precedes the knowledge of an extensive property, and the meannesses which flow from refinement and commerce, is in a high degree propitious to women.—*Stuart's View of Society.*

Human society is in its most corrupted state at that period when men have lost their original independence and simplicity of manners, but have not attained that degree of refinement which introduces a sense of decorum and of propriety in conduct, as a restraint on those passions which lead to heinous crimes.—*Robertson's View of Society.*

It is often regarded as the most natural order, thus to place in the front that which forms the chief object of the proposition to be expressed. Sometimes however it is of advantage to suspend the meaning for a while, and then unfold it completely at the close of the period.

Why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being.—*Johnson's Rasselas.*

On whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us, is his wonderful invention.—*Pope's Preface to Homer.*

The Greek and Latin authors possessed the liberty of inversion in a more eminent degree. The genius of their respective languages permitted them to choose the most advantageous position for every word; and this privilege tended greatly to add force



and vivacity to their sentences. The more ancient English writers have endeavoured to imitate them in this respect; but their forced and unnatural constructions often produce obscurity. Our language, as it is now written and spoken, will not admit such liberties. Yet the inverted style may still be employed within certain limits. In the following instance an inverted arrangement of words is adopted with evident propriety.

The praise of judgment Virgil has justly contested with him, but his invention remains yet unrivalled.—*Pope's Preface to Homer.*

It is evident that, in order to give this sentence its due force, by properly contrasting the two capital words *judgment* and *invention*, this is a more happy arrangement than if the author had thus followed another order: "Virgil has justly contested with him the praise of judgment, but his invention remains yet unrivalled."

Such inversions as our language admits, are more frequently practised by some writers than by others; by Shaftesbury, for instance, much more than by Addison. It is to this mode of arrangement that Shaftesbury's style is chiefly indebted for its appearance of strength, dignity, and varied harmony. But if he has more pomp and majesty than Addison, he certainly must be allowed to possess less ease and simplicity, which are beauties highly deserving a writer's attention.

Whether we practise inversion or not, and in whatever part of the sentence we dispose of the most important words, it is always a point of great moment that those words stand clear from others which would

entangle them. Thus, when there are any limitations of time, or place, or of any other description, which the principal object of the sentence requires to have connected with it, we must be careful to dispose of them so as to avoid clouding that object, or burying it under a load of circumstances. This is very happily effected in the following quotation, in which the author is speaking of modern poets, as compared with the ancient.

If, whilst they profess only to please, they secretly advise, and give instruction, they may now perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed with justice the best and most honourable among authors.  
—*Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author.*

This sentence is skilfully constructed. It contains a great number of circumstances necessary to qualify the meaning; yet these are placed with so much art, that they neither weaken nor embarrass. Let us examine what would be the effect of a different arrangement. "If, whilst they profess to please only, they advise and give instruction secretly, they may be esteemed the best and most honourable among authors, with justice perhaps now, as well as formerly." Here we have precisely the same words, and the same sense; but, in consequence of the circumstances being so intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes perplexed, and totally devoid of grace and strength.

The following sentence contains a great number of circumstances disposed with little skill.

And that it was not peculiar to the gift of language or tongues only, to be given at the moment of its exertion, but common likewise to all the rest, will be shown probably, on some other occasion,

more at large in a particular treatise, which is already prepared by me, on that subject.—*Middleton's Free Inquiry.*

V. Sentences ought never to be concluded with words which make an inconsiderable figure. Such conclusions always have the effect of enfeebling and degrading. There may indeed be sentences in which the stress or significancy rests chiefly upon adverbs; and in this case, they ought to have a principal place allotted to them. No objection therefore can be urged against such an arrangement as appears in this period: "In their prosperity, my friends shall never hear of me; in their adversity *always*." Here the adverb *always*, being an emphatical word, is so placed as to make a strong impression. The subsequent quotation furnishes an instance of the same kind.

I sat in my old friend's seat; I heard the roar of mirth and gaiety around me: poor Ben Silton! I gave thee a tear *then*; accept of one cordial drop that falls to thy memory *now*.—*Mackenzie's Man of Feeling.*

But in the following examples, we find words of a like description occupying the same station, without any acknowledged right to such distinction.

This agreement of mankind is not confined to the taste *solely*.—*Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

The other species of motion are incidentally bended *also*.—*Harris's Philosophical Arrangements.*

He thinks it much more likely that such a system should continue to be admired and praised in idea, than established in fact; and if it happens ever to be established, he does not imagine it can be supported *long*.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

Since my late arrival in Ireland, I have found a very unusual, but, I doubt not, a very just, complaint concerning the scarcity of money, which occasioned many airy propositions for the remedy of it, and among the rest that of raising some, or all of the coins *here*.—*Temple on the Advancement of Trade.*

We should particularly avoid concluding a period with prepositions which mark the cases of nouns or which are combined with verbs. A certain divine, in allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity, makes use of the subsequent expressions: "It is a mystery which we firmly believe the truth of, and humbly adore the depth of."\* Such phraseology ought on no occasion to be adopted: for, besides the want of dignity which arises from those monosyllables being placed at the close, the mind cannot avoid resting for a little upon the word which concludes the sentence; and, as these prepositions have no import of their own, but merely serve to point out the relation of other words, it is disagreeable thus to be left pausing on a word which of itself cannot produce any idea, or present any picture to the fancy.

I therefore thought it necessary to fix and determine the notion of these two words, as I intend to make use of them in the thread of my following speculations, that the reader may conceive rightly what is the subject which I proceed *upon*.—*Addison, Spectator*.

There needs no more than to make such a registry only voluntary, to avoid all the difficulties that can be raised, and which are not too captious, or too trivial to take notice of.—*Temple on Popular Discontents*.

By these means the country loses the expense of many of the richest persons or families at home, and mighty sums of money must needs go over from hence into England, which the great stock of rich native commodities here can make the only amends for.—*Temple on the Advancement of Trade*.

But it is absurd to think of judging either Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to.—*Warton's Observations on Spenser*.

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\* Mason's Essay on the Power and Harmony of Prosaic Numbers, p. 20.



No one pretends to be a judge in poetry or the fine arts, who has not both a natural and cultivated relish for them; and shall the narrow-minded children of the earth, absorbed in low pursuits, dare to treat as visionary, objects which they have never made themselves acquainted with?—*Barbault on the Devotional Taste.*

The act of touching that, considered thus immediately, and in these particular present circumstances, is not what my mind is absolutely indifferent about.—*Edwards's Inquiry into the Freedom of Will.*

The pronoun *it* ought as seldom as possible to be placed at the close of a sentence. When it immediately succeeds a verb, its effect is not so disagreeable; but when joined with a preposition, it is intolerable.

When you are pinched with any former, and yet unrepealed act of parliament, you declare that, in some cases, you will not be obliged by it.—*Dryden's Epistle to the Whigs.*

I would humbly offer an amendment, that instead of the word Christianity, may be put religion in general; which, I conceive, will much better answer all the good ends proposed by the projectors of it.—*Swift's Argument against Abolishing Christianity.*

Every nature, you perceive, is either too excellent to want it, or too base to be capable of it.—*Harris's Dialogue concerning Art.*

Although it is not always necessary that every thing advanced by the speaker, should convey information to the hearer, it is necessary that he should believe himself informed by what is said, ere he can be convinced or persuaded by it.—*Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric.*

It is surprizing that writers who have paid the smallest attention to elegance, should allow the word *it* to conclude two successive periods. Yet instances of this kind sometimes occur.

In like manner, if a person in broad day-light were falling asleep, to introduce a sudden darkness would prevent his sleep for that time, though silence and darkness in themselves, and not suddenly introduced, are very favourable to *it*. This I knew only by conjec-



ture on the analogy of the senses when I first digested these observations ; but I have since experienced it.—*Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

The general idea of good or bad fortune, therefore, creates some concern for the person who has met with it ; but the general idea of provocation excites no sympathy with the anger of the man who has received it. Nature, it seems, teaches us to be more averse to enter into this passion, and, till informed of its cause, to be disposed rather to take part against it.—*Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.*

VI. In the members of a sentence where two objects are either compared or contrasted, some resemblance in the language and construction should be preserved. To illustrate this rule, I shall produce various instances of deviations from it ; beginning with resemblances expressed in words which have no resemblance.

I have observed of late, the style of some great *ministers* very much to exceed that of any other *productions*.—*Swift on the English Tongue.*

Instead of *productions*, which bear no resemblance to ministers great or small, the author ought to have employed the word *writers*.

I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with *other judgments*, must at some time or other have stuck a little with *your lordship*.—*Shaftesbury on Enthusiasm.*

This sentence ought to have stood thus : “ I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with *others*, must at some time or other have stuck with *your lordship*.”

Force was resisted by force, valour opposed by valour, and art encountered or eluded by *similar address*.—*Gillies's Hist. of Greece.*

This period is evidently marred by an injudicious at-

tempt to vary the phraseology. "Force was resisted by force, valour opposed by valour, and art encountered or eluded by art."

It is a still greater deviation from congruity, to affect not only variety in the words, but also in the construction. There is a fault of this kind in the following sentence, in which the author is speaking of Shakspeare.

There may remain a suspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius, in the same manner as bodies appear more gigantic on account of their being disproportioned and mis-shapen.—*Hume's Hist. of England.*

This is studying variety where the beauty lies in uniformity. The sentence might have been constructed in this manner: "There may remain a suspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius, in the same manner as we over-rate the greatness of bodies that are disproportioned and mis-shapen."

Attention should also be paid to the length of members which signify the resembling objects. To produce a resemblance between such members, they ought not only to be constructed in the same manner, but also to be as nearly as possible of the same length. By neglecting this circumstance, the subsequent example is rendered liable to exception.

As the performance of all other religious duties will not avail in the sight of God, *without charity*; so neither will the discharge of all other ministerial duties avail in the sight of men, *without a faithful discharge of this principal duty.*—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

In the following passage, all the errors are accumulated which a period expressing a resemblance can well admit.

Ministers are answerable for every thing done to the prejudice of the constitution, in the same proportion as the preservation of the constitution, in its purity and vigour, or the perverting and weakening it, are of greater consequence to the nation, than any other instances of good or bad government.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

As resemblance ought to be studied in the words which express two resembling objects, so opposition ought to be studied in the words which express two contrasted objects. The following examples contain deviations from this rule.

A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy inflames his crimes.—*Addison, Spectator.*

Here the opposition in the thought is neglected in the words, which at first view seem to import that the friend and the enemy are employed in different matters, without any relation to each other, whether of resemblance or of opposition. The contrast will be better marked by expressing the idea as follows: "A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy his crimes."

The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of them about him.—*Spectator.*

This sentence might have stood thus: "The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool when he gains that of others."

The laughers will be for those who have most wit; the serious part of mankind for those who have most reason on their side.—*Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties.*

The opposition would have been more completely expressed in this manner: "The laughers will be for

those who have most wit ; the serious, for those who have most reason on their side."

In the following passage, we find two great poets very skilfully contrasted with each other.

Homer was the greater genius, Virgil the better artist ; in the one, we most admire the man, in the other the work. Homer hurries us with a commanding impetuosity ; Virgil leads us with an attractive majesty. Homer scatters with a generous profusion ; Virgil bestows with a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches with a sudden overflow ; Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a constant stream.—*Pope's Preface to Homer.*

This picture however would have been more finished, if to the Nile some particular river had been opposed.

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## CHAP. X.

### OF HARMONY IN THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

ALTHOUGH sound is a quality of much less importance than sense, yet it must not be altogether disregarded ; for as sounds are the vehicle of our ideas, there must always be a pretty intimate connexion between the idea which is conveyed, and the sound employed in its conveyance. Pleasing ideas can hardly be transmitted to the mind by means of harsh and disagreeable sounds. At these the mind immediately revolts. Nothing can enter into the affections which stumbles at the threshold by offending the ear. Music has naturally a great power over all men to



prompt and facilitate certain emotions; insomuch that there are scarcely any dispositions which we wish to raise in others, but certain sounds may be found concordant to those dispositions, and tending to excite and promote them. Language is to a certain degree possessed of the same power: not content with simply interpreting our ideas to the hearer, it can communicate them enforced by corresponding sounds; and to the pleasure of imparted knowledge, can add the new and the separate pleasure of melody.

In the harmony of sentences, two circumstances may be considered; agreeable sound, or modulation, in general, without any particular expression, and sound so regulated as to become expressive of the sense.

Let us first consider sound in general, as the property of a well-constructed sentence. The musical cadence of a sentence will depend upon two circumstances; the choice of words, and the arrangement of them.

With regard to the choice of words little can be said, unless we were to descend into a tedious detail concerning the powers of the several letters, or simple sounds, of which speech is composed. It is evident that those words are most agreeable to the ear which are composed of smooth and liquid sounds, where there is a proper intermixture of vowels and consonants, without too many harsh consonants clashing with each other, or too many open vowels in succession, to cause a hiatus or disagreeable aperture of the mouth. It may always be assumed as a principle, that whatever words are difficult in pro-



nunciation, are, in the same proportion, harsh and painful to the ear. Vowels add softness, consonants strength, to the sound of words. The melody of language requires a due proportion of both, and will be destroyed by an excess of either. Long words are commonly more agreeable to the ear than monosyllables: they please it by the succession of sounds which they present; and accordingly the most musical languages possess them in the greatest abundance. Among words of any length, those are the most musical which do not wholly consist either of long or short syllables, but contain a due intermixture of both.

The English language abounds with monosyllables, more particularly that portion of the language which is derived from the Anglo-Saxon; and the difficulty of forming an harmonious combination of so many short words, is a frequent reason for preferring those of a French origin. The following sentence contains no fewer than twenty-nine monosyllables in uninterrupted succession: "And he answering, said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."\*

The harmony which results from a proper arrangement of the words and members of a period, is a more complex subject. However well-chosen and well-sounding the words themselves may be, yet if they be ill-disposed, the music of the sentence is utterly

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\* Luke x. 27.—Wycliffe's version is not materially different: "He answerde and seide, thou schalt loue thi Lord God of alle thin herte, and of alle thi soule, and of all thi strengthis, and of alle thi mynde; and thi neighbore as thi silf."

lost. In the harmonious arrangement of his periods, no writer, ancient or modern, can be brought into competition with Cicero: this subject he had studied with the utmost care; and he was fond, perhaps to excess, of what he calls the "*plena ac numerosa oratio*." We need only open his writings, to find instances that will render the effect of musical cadence sensible to every ear. And in our own language, the following passage may be quoted as an instance of harmonious construction.

We shall conduct you to a hill side, laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.—*Milton's Tractate of Education*.

Every thing in this sentence conspires to promote the harmony. The words are happily chosen, being full of soft and liquid sounds; *laborious, smooth, green, goodly, melodious, charming*; and those words are so skilfully arranged, that, were we to alter the collocation of any of them, the melody would sustain a sensible injury. The members of the period swell beautifully above each other; till the ear, prepared by this gradual rise, is conducted to that full close on which it always rests with pleasure.

The structure of sentences, then, being susceptible of very considerable melody, our next enquiry should be, how this melodious structure is formed, what are its principles, and by what laws it is regulated. This subject has been treated with great copiousness by the ancient critics.\* But the languages of Greece

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\* The reader may consult Dionysius Halicarnassensis de *Structura Orationis*, Demetrius Phalereus de *Elocutione*, Hermogenes

and Rome were more susceptible than ours, of the graces and powers of melody. The quantities of their syllables were more fixed and determinate; their words were longer, and more sonorous; their method of varying the terminations of nouns and verbs both introduced a greater variety of liquid sounds, and freed them from that multiplicity of little auxiliary words which we are under the necessity of employing; and, what is of the greatest consequence, the inversions which their languages allowed, gave them the power of placing their words in whatever order was most suited to a musical arrangement. In consequence of the structure of their languages, and of their manner of pronouncing them, the musical cadence of sentences produced a greater effect in public speaking among them, than it could possibly do among any modern people. It is further to be observed, that for every species of music they had a finer relish than prevails among us: it was more generally studied, and applied to a greater variety of objects. Our northern ears are too coarse and obtuse; and by our simple and plainer method of pro-

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de Formis Oratoriis, Cicero de Oratore, and Quinctilian de Institutione Oratoria. The subject is briefly discussed by Aristotle, de Rhetorica, lib. iii. cap. viii. See likewise the treatise of Bishop Cleaver, *De Rhythmo Græcorum liber singularis*, p. 43. edit. Oxon: 1789, 8vo. It may not here be improper to state, that a collection of the Greek rhetoricians was published by Dr. Gale, the learned dean of York, under the title of "*Rhetores Selecti: Demetrius Phalereus, Tiberius Rhetor, anonymus Sophista, Severus Alexandrinus.*" Oxonii, 1676, 8vo. Of one of these authors, a very recent edition has appeared: "*Tiberius Rhetor de Figuris, altera parte auctior; una cum Rufi Arte Rhetorica: edidit Jo. Fr. Boissonade.*" Lond. 1815, 8vo.



nunciation, speech is accompanied with less melody than it was among the Greeks and Romans.

For these reasons, it would be fruitless to bestow the same attention upon the harmonious structure of our sentences, as was bestowed by those ancient nations. The doctrine of the Greek and Roman critics, on this head, has induced some to imagine that our prose writings may be regulated by spondees, and trochees, iambuses and pæons, and other metrical feet.\* But, to refute this notion, nothing further is necessary than its being applied to practice. In the classical language of antiquity, the length of every syllable is regulated and ascertained: but modern languages being differently organized, do not admit of the same degree of nicety; and no success has yet attended any project of making English verses move on Roman feet. Although English words contain long and short syllables, yet the quantity of every syllable is not fixed by specific rules; and the harmony of English verse depends rather upon emphasis than quantity.† If the rules of ancient prosody cannot be applied to English verse, it is scarcely to be expected that they should be applied to English prose.

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\* See "An Essay on the Power and Harmony of Prosaic Numbers," by John Mason, A. M. The second edition occurs in his "Essays on Poetical and Prosaic Numbers, and Elocution." Lond. 1761, 8vo.—There is a work, more curious than useful, published by Joshua Steele under the title of "*Prosodia Rationalis*: or, an Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols." Lond. 1779, 4to. This is the second edition, but the first appears to have been confined to private circulation.

† See however Dr. Foster's *Essay on Accent and Quantity*, p. 27. sec. edit. Eton, 1763, 8vo.

Here it may be incidentally mentioned, as a subject of some curiosity, that the ancient rhetoricians, and even Aristotle himself,\* have enumerated an occasional recurrence of the same sound among the graces of oratorical composition. If the Greeks approved of rhyming clauses of a sentence in prose, it may naturally enough be supposed that they did not disapprove of rhyming verses in poetry; and we accordingly find that an ancient biographer of Homer has particularized the admission of rhyming verses as one of the various merits of his poetry.† It is indeed obvious to every reader of his works that such verses are very numerous: how far they are to be ascribed to accident or to design, we cannot so easily determine; but when critics and rhetoricians commended poets and orators for this introduction of rhyming verses and clauses, they evidently presupposed a deliberate intention of producing what they considered as a pleasing effect.

Although the musical arrangement of English prose cannot easily be reduced to a system, it yet demands a very considerable share of attention. It is in a great degree owing to the neglect of melody, that British eloquence still remains in a state of immaturity. The growth of eloquence indeed, even in those

\* Aristoteles de Rhetorica, lib. iii. cap. ix. p. 223.

† After quoting several examples of rhyme, or the *ὁμοιοτέλευτον σχῆμα*, this writer, who is sometimes supposed to be Plutarch, subjoins the following remark: *Τὰ δὲ εἰρημένα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα μάλιστα προστίθῃσι τῷ λόγῳ χάριν καὶ ἡδονήν.* (Plutarchi Moralia, tom. v. p. 1096. edit. Wytttenbach.) Of the antiquity of rhyme I have treated at much greater length, in the Foreign Review, vol. iii. p. 57.



countries where it chiefly flourished, has ever been very slow. Athens had been in possession of all other polite improvements long before her pretensions to the persuasive arts were in any degree considerable; and the earliest orator of note among the Romans did not appear sooner than about a century before Cicero. That great master of persuasion, taking notice of this remarkable circumstance, assigns it as an evidence of the superior difficulty of his favourite art. There may be some truth in the observation; but whatever the cause may have been, the fact is undeniable. Accordingly eloquence has by no means made equal advances in our own country, with her sister arts; and though we have seen many excellent poets, and a few good painters, arise among us, yet our nation can boast of very few accomplished orators. This circumstance will appear more surprising, when it is considered that we have a profession set apart for the purposes of persuasion; a profession which is conversant with the most animating topics of rhetoric.

Mr. Geddes has remarked that "many writers both in verse and prose have been very exact in their choice of words elegant and adapted to the subject; but, being destitute of a just ear, run into dissonant and jarring measures, by which they lose their labour, and spoil the whole. Their productions are unpleasant and nauseous to the reader. Others, though so unlucky as to chuse mean and vulgar words, yet by arranging them in a melodious manner, have given a surprising beauty to their diction. The truth is, the position of words seems to bear the same proportion to the choice of them, that the

words themselves have to the sentiments. As the finest sentiment is cold and languid when not clothed with the ornament of beautiful language, so the invention of the purest and most elegant expression will have small effect unless you add an harmonious composition.”\*

Among the principal defects of our British orators, their general disregard of harmony has been least observed. It would indeed be unjust to deny that we have some oratorical performances tolerably musical; but it must be acknowledged that, for the most part, this is more the effect of accident than design, and rather to be attributed to the power of our language, than to the skill of our orators.

Archbishop Tillotson, who is frequently mentioned as having carried this species of eloquence to its highest perfection, seems to have no kind of rhetorical numbers; and no man had ever less pretension to genuine oratory, than this celebrated preacher.† If any thing could raise a flame of eloquence in the breast of an orator, there is no occasion on which it would be more likely to break out, than in celebrat-

\* Geddes's *Essay on the Composition and Manner of Writing of the Ancients*, particularly Plato, p. 3. Glasgow, 1748, 8vo.—This writer appears to have enjoyed some reputation on the continent. See Klotz's *Acta Litteraria*, vol. vi. p. 355, and the *Bibliotheca Critica*, vol. ii. par. ii. p. 65.

† Mr. Mason has given a more favourable account of his talents for oratory: “Archbishop Tillotson hath all the simplicity and perspicuity of the former [Dr. Sharp, archbishop of York], but is much more harmonious. He had a nice ear and a clear head; was happy in the sweetness of his numbers, an inimitable ease of stile and solidity of argument.” (*Essay on the Power and Harmony of Prosaic Numbers*, p. 48.)

ing departed merit: yet the two sermons which he preached upon the death of Dr. Whichcote and Mr. Gouge, are nearly as cold and languid performances as were ever produced on such an animating subject. It is indeed to be regretted, that he who abounds with such noble and generous sentiments should want the art of displaying them to their full advantage; that the sublime in morals should not be attended with a suitable elevation of language. His words are commonly ill-chosen, and always ill-placed; his periods are both tedious and inharmonious, as his metaphors are generally mean, and sometimes ludicrous. It were easy to produce numberless instances of the truth of this assertion. Thus in his sermon preached before the princess of Denmark, he talks of *squeezing* a parable, *sharking shifts*, *thrusting religion by*, *driving a strict bargain* with God; and speaking of the day of judgment, he describes the world as *cracking about our ears*. In justice to the oratorical character of this most estimable prelate, it must however be acknowledged that there is a noble simplicity in some few of his sermons. His discourse on sincerity deserves to be mentioned with peculiar applause.

But to shew his deficiency in the quality of which I am now treating, the following quotation will be sufficient:

One might be apt to think, at first view, that this parable was *overdone*, and wanted something of a due decorum; it being hardly credible, that a man, after he had been so mercifully dealt *withal*, as, upon his humble request, to have so *huge* a debt so freely forgiven, should, whilst the memory of so much mercy was fresh *upon him*, even in the very next moment, *handle* his fellow servant, who had made the same humble request to him which he had done to his lord,



with so much roughness and cruelty, for so inconsiderable a sum,—  
*Tillotson's Sermons.*

Not to mention other objections which might be raised against this period, it is uniformly harsh and unmusical. The concluding members, which ought to have been full and flowing, are miserably loose and disjointed. If the delicacy of Cicero's ear was so exquisitely refined, as not always to be satisfied even with the numbers of Demosthenes, how would it have been offended by the harshness and dissonance of so inharmonious a sentence !\*

Nothing tends to remove our eloquence to a greater distance from that of the ancients, than this Gothic arrangement ; as those wonderful effects which sometimes attended their elocution were, in all probability, chiefly owing to their skill in musical concords. It was by the charm of numbers, united with the strength of reason, that Cicero confounded the audacious Cataline, and silenced the eloquent Hortensius ; it was this that deprived Curio of all power of recollection, when he attempted to oppose that great master of rhetoric ; it was this that made even Cæsar himself tremble ; nay, what is yet more extraordinary, made Cæsar alter his determined purpose, and acquit the man whom he had resolved to condemn.

It will not be suspected that too much is here attributed to the power of numerous composition, when we recollect an instance which Cicero produces of its wonderful effect. He informs us that he was himself a witness of its influence as Carbo was once haranguing the people. It was astonishing, says

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\* See Mr. Mitford's Essay upon the Harmony of Language, p. 201.

he, to observe the general applause which burst from the assembly when that orator pronounced the following sentence: "Patris dictum sapiens temeritas filii comprobavit." These words perhaps will not greatly affect a modern ear; and indeed it is probable that we are ignorant of the art of pronouncing the period with its genuine emphasis and cadence. We are however certain that its music consisted in the dichoree with which it is terminated; for Cicero himself assures us that if the final measure had been changed, and the words placed in a different order, their effect would have been entirely destroyed.

The art of numerous arrangement was introduced among the Greeks by Thrasymachus, though some of the admirers of Isocrates attributed the invention to the latter. It does not appear to have been studied by the Romans until about the age of Cicero; and even then it was by no means universally received. The ancient mode of composition had still many admirers, who were such enthusiasts with regard to antiquity, that they adopted her very defects. A disposition of the same kind may perhaps prevent its being much cultivated in Britain; and while Tillotson shall maintain his authority as an orator, it is not to be expected that any great advances will be made in this species of eloquence. That strength of understanding, and solidity of reason, which forms so conspicuous a part of the national character, may also serve to increase the difficulty of reconciling us to a study of this kind; as at first glance it may seem to lead an orator from his principal aim, and tempt him to make a sacrifice of sense to sound. It must indeed be acknowledged that in the times which



succeeded the dissolution of the Roman republic, this art was so perverted from its true end, as to become the sole study of their enervated orators. Pliny the younger often complains of this contemptible affectation; and the polite author of that elegant dialogue which, with very little probability, is attributed either to Tacitus or Quintilian, assures us it was the ridiculous boast of certain orators in the time of the declension of genuine eloquence, that their harangues were capable of being set to music, and sung upon the stage. But it must be remembered that the true art now recommended is designed to aid, not to supersede reason: it is so far from being necessarily effeminate, that it adds not only grace but strength to the powers of persuasion. Cicero and Quintilian have laid it down as an invariable rule, that numerous composition must never appear the effect of labour in the orator; that the tuneful flow of his periods must always seem the result of their casual disposition; and that it is the highest offence against the art, to weaken the expression for the sake of giving a more musical tone to the cadence.

There are two circumstances on which the music of a sentence chiefly depends; the proper distribution of its several members, and the close or cadence of the whole.

Whatever is easy and agreeable in the pronunciation has always a grateful sound to the ear; and that which is difficult in the pronunciation, can never be possessed of melody. The facility with which any sentence is recited, must in a great measure depend upon the proper disposition of the pauses. They ought to be so distributed as to render the course

of the breathing easy, and at the same time should fall at such distances as to bear a certain musical proportion to each other. This rule will be best illustrated by examples.

This discourse concerning the easiness of God's commands, does, all along, suppose and acknowledge the difficulties of the first entrance upon a religious course; except only in those persons who have had the happiness to be trained up to religion by the easy and insensible degrees of a pious and virtuous education.—*Tillotson's Sermons.*

This sentence is in some degree harsh and unpleasant: it contains no more than one considerable pause, which falls between the two members; and each of those members is so long, as to occasion a difficulty in breathing while it is pronounced. The following are instances of a different kind.

By smoothing those inequalities, which the necessary difference of ranks and conditions has introduced into society, she not only reconciles us to the highest eminences of life, but leads us to consider them as affording to the social world, that sublime contrast which the landscape derives from the diversity of hill and dale, and as sending down those streams of benignity which refresh and gladden the lower stations.—*Brown's Sermons.*

When thine aching eye shall look forward to the end that is far distant; and when behind thou shalt find no retreat; when thy steps shall falter, and thou shalt tremble at the depth beneath which thought itself is not able to fathom; then shall the angel of retribution lift his inexorable hand against thee; from the irremediable way shall thy feet be smitten; thou shalt plunge in the burning flood, and though thou shalt live for ever, thou shalt rise no more.—*Hawkesworth's Almorán and Hamet.*

Porticoes, which had withstood the assaults of time more than two thousand years; broken columns of different lengths, rising at a considerable distance within the limits of the same pile; sculptured portals, through whose frowning arches the winds passed with a hollow murmuring; numberless figures engraven on the pilasters of those portals; and multitudes of hieroglyphics on the different parts

of the spacious ruin; gave the travellers a mournful and magnificent idea of the pristine grandeur of this edifice.—*Langhorne's Solomon and Almena.*

Here every thing is flowing and easy. The members of the sentences bear a just proportion to each other; and the reader therefore never experiences any difficulty of breathing.

The next subject which claims our attention is, the close or cadence of the whole sentence, which, as it is always the part most sensible to the ear, demands the greatest care. Upon it the mind pauses and rests; it ought therefore to contain nothing harsh or abrupt. When we aim at dignity or elevation, the sound should be made to swell gradually to the end; the longest members of the period, and the fullest and most sonorous words, should be reserved for the conclusion. The following sentence is constructed in this manner.

It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance; and continues the longest in action, without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments.—*Addison, Spectator.*

Here every reader must be sensible of a beauty, both in the division of the members and pauses, and the manner in which the sentence is rounded, and conducted to a full and harmonious close. “Mr. Addison’s periods, and members of periods,” says Mr. Mitford, “mostly end with the unaccented hyper-rhythmical syllable, and scarcely ever with a strong accent, except where emphasis gives importance to such a conclusion. The graceful flow so much admired in his writings, is not a little owing to this circumstance. His language seems always united like



water, by the aptitude of its parts to coalesce, and never wears the appearance of being forcibly held together."\*

A falling off towards the end always produces a disagreeable effect. For this reason, pronouns and prepositions are as unpleasant to the ear, as they are inconsistent with strength of expression. The sense and the sound seem to have a mutual influence on each other; that which offends the ear is apt to mar the strength of the meaning; and that which really degrades the sense appears also to have a bad sound. It may be affirmed in general that a musical close, in our language, requires either the last, or the last but one, to be a long syllable. Words which consist mostly of short syllables, as *contrary*, *retrospect*, *particular*, seldom conclude a sentence harmoniously, unless a succession of long syllables has rendered them agreeable on account of the variety which they introduce.

It is however necessary to observe that sentences so constructed as to make the sound always swell towards the end, and to rest upon syllables of a certain description, give a discourse the tone of declamation: the ear soon becomes acquainted with the melody, and is apt to be cloyed with monotony. If we would keep alive the attention of the reader or hearer, if we would preserve vivacity and strength in our composi-

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\* Mitford's Essay upon the Harmony of Language, p. 203. Lond. 1774, 8vo.—This work, which is learned and able, but somewhat pedantic, the author afterwards enlarged, and published under the title of "An Inquiry into the Principles of Harmony in Language, and of the Mechanism of Verse, modern and ancient." Lond. 1804, 8vo.

tion, we must be solicitous to vary our measures. This observation regards the distribution of the members, as well as the cadence of the period. Sentences constructed in a similar manner, with the pauses falling at equal intervals, should never follow each other. Short and long sentences ought to be properly intermixed, in order to render discourse sprightly, as well as magnificent. Monotony is the great error into which those writers are apt to fall, who study harmonious arrangement. A very vulgar ear will enable an author to catch some kind of melody, and to form all his sentences according to it; but this oft-recurring modulation will soon produce satiety and disgust. A just and correct ear is requisite for diversifying the melody; and hence we so seldom meet with authors remarkably happy in this respect.

Though the music of sentences demands a very considerable degree of attention, yet this attention must be confined within moderate bounds. Every appearance of affectation of harmony is disagreeable; especially if the love of it betray us so far as to sacrifice perspicuity, precision, or strength of sentiment, to sound. All unmeaning words, introduced merely to round the period or complete the melody, are great blemishes in writing: they are childish ornaments, by which a sentence always loses more in point of significance, than it can gain in point of melody. After all the labour bestowed by Quinctilian on regulating the measures of prose, he comes at last, with his usual good sense, to this conclusion: "Upon the whole, I would rather chuse that composition should appear rough and harsh, if that be necessary, than that it



should be enervated and effeminate, such as we find in the style of too many. Some sentences therefore which we have studiously formed into melody, should be thrown loose, that they may not seem too much laboured; nor ought we ever to omit any proper or expressive word, for the sake of smoothing a period.”\*

Hitherto our attention has been directed to agreeable sound, or modulation in general. It yet remains to treat of a higher beauty, the sound adapted to the sense. This beauty may either be attained in prose or verse; but in illustrating its general principles, the writings of the poets will furnish us with the most copious and striking illustrations.

The resemblance of poetical numbers to the subject which they mention or describe, may be considered as general or particular, as consisting in the flow and structure of a whole passage taken together, or as comprised in the sound of some emphatical and descriptive words, or in the cadence and harmony of single verses.

A general analogy between the sound and the sense is to be found in every language which admits of poetry, in every author whose fancy enables him to impress images strongly on his own mind, and whose choice and variety of language readily supply him with just representations.† To such a writer it is natural to change his measure with his subject, even without any effort of the understanding, or intervention of the judgment. To revolve jollity and mirth, necessarily tunes the voice of a poet to gay and

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\* Quintilian. de Institut. Orator. lib. ix. cap. iv.

† See Dr. Beattie's Essay on Poetry and Music, p. 282.

sprightly notes, as it fires his eye with vivacity; and reflections on gloomy situations and disastrous events, will sadden his numbers as it will cloud his countenance. But in such passages, there is only the similitude of pleasure to pleasure, and of grief to grief, without any immediate application of particular images. The same flow of joyous versification will celebrate the jollity of marriage, and the exultation of triumph; and the same languor of melody will suit the complaint of an absent lover, and the lamentations of a conquered king.

It is scarcely to be doubted that on many occasions we produce the music which we imagine ourselves to hear; that we modulate the poem by our own disposition, and ascribe to the numbers the effects of the sense. We may observe in real life that it is not easy to deliver a pleasing message in an unpleasing manner, and that we readily associate beauty and deformity with those whom we have reason to love or hate. Yet it would be too daring to declare that all the celebrated adaptations of harmony are chimerical; that Homer, Virgil, and Milton, paid no extraordinary attention to their numbers in any of those passages where the sound is said to be an echo to the sense.\*

There being frequently a strong resemblance of one sound to another, it will not be surprizing to find an articulate sound resembling one that is not articulate. Of this resemblance we meet with an exemplification in the following passages.

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\* Johnson's Rambler, No. 94.—See likewise Dr. Whately's Elements of Rhetoric, p. 216.

On a sudden open fly,  
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
 Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
 Harsh thunder. *Milton.*

The impetuous arrow *whizzes* on the wing.—*Pope.*

The string, let fly,  
*Twang'd short and sharp*, like the shrill swallow's cry.—*Pope.*  
 Loud sounds the air, redoubling strokes on strokes,  
 On all sides round the forest hurls her oaks  
 Headlong: deep echoing groan the thickets brown,  
 Then *rustling, crackling, crashing*, thunder down.—*Pope.*

The pilgrim oft  
 At dead of night 'mid his oraison hears  
 Aghast the voice of Time, disparting towers,  
 Tumbling all precipitate down-dashed,  
 Rattling around, loud thundering to the moon.—*Dyer.*

That there is any other natural resemblance of sound to signification, must not be taken for granted. There is evidently no similarity between sound and motion, or between sound and sentiment. We are apt to be deceived by an artful pronunciation: the same passage may be pronounced in many different tones, elevated or humble, sweet or harsh, brisk or melancholy, so as to accord with the sentiment or thought. This concordance must be carefully distinguished from that between sound and sense; which may sometimes subsist without any dependence upon artful pronunciation.

There is another circumstance which contributes still more to the deceit: sound and sense being intimately connected, the properties of the one are readily communicated to the other. Thus, for example, the quality of grandeur, of sweetness, or of melancholy, though solely belonging to the thought,



is transferred to the word by which that quality is expressed. In this manner, words bear an imaginary resemblance to those objects of which they are only the arbitrary signs. It is of the greatest importance to distinguish the natural resemblance of sound and signification, from those artificial resemblances which have now been described.

From the instances lately adduced, it is evident that there may be a similarity between sounds articulate and sounds inarticulate. But we may safely pronounce that this resemblance can be carried no farther. The objects of the different senses have no similarity to each other; sound, whether articulate or inarticulate, bears no kind of analogy to taste or smell; and as little can it resemble internal sentiment, feeling, or emotion. Must we then admit that nothing but sound can be imitated by sound? Taking imitation in its proper sense, as importing a coincidence between different objects, the proposition must be admitted; and yet in many passages which are not descriptive of sound, every one must be sensible of a peculiar concord between the sound of the words and their meaning. As there can be no doubt of the fact, what remains is to enquire into its cause.

Resembling causes may produce effects which have no resemblance; and causes which have no resemblance may produce resembling effects. A magnificent building, for example, does not in any degree resemble an heroic action; and yet the emotions which they produce, are sometimes concordant, or bear a remote resemblance to each other. We are still more sensible of this kind of resemblance in a song, when the music is properly adapted to the sen-



timent. There is no similarity between thought and sound; but there is the strongest similarity between the emotion excited by music tender and pathetic, and that excited by the complaint of an unsuccessful lover. When we apply this observation to the present subject, it will appear that in some instances the sound even of a single word makes an impression similar to what is produced by the thing which it signifies. Of this description are *running*, *rapidity*, *impetuosity*, *precipitation*. Brutal manners produce in the spectator an emotion not unlike what is caused by a harsh and rough sound; and hence the beauty of the figurative expression, *rugged* manners. The word *little*, being pronounced with a very small aperture of the mouth, has a weak and faint sound, which makes an impression resembling that produced by a diminutive object. This resemblance of effects is still more remarkable where a number of words is connected in the same period. Words pronounced in succession often produce a strong impression; and when this impression happens to accord with that made by the sense, we are aware of a complex emotion, peculiarly pleasant; one proceeding from the sentiment, and one from the melody or sound of the words. But the chief pleasure arises from having these two concordant emotions combined in perfect harmony, and conducted in the mind to a full close.

Except those passages in which sound is described, all the examples given by critics of sense being imitated by sound, resolve themselves into a resemblance of effects. Emotions excited by sound and signification may have a mutual resemblance; but

sound itself cannot have a resemblance to any thing but sound.

After having suggested these general observations, it will be proper to descend to particular examples.

By a number of syllables in succession, an emotion is sometimes raised, similar to that excited by successive motion. In this manner slow motion may be justly imitated in a verse where long syllables prevail, especially with the aid of a slow pronunciation.

*Illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt.—Virgil.*

On the other hand, swift motion is imitated by a succession of short syllables.

*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.—Virgil.*

By the frequency of its pauses, a line composed of monosyllables makes an impression similar to what is made by laborious interrupted motion.

*First march the heavy mules securely slow ;  
O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er crags, o'er rocks they go.—Pope.*

*With many a weary step, and many a groan,  
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.—Pope.*

The impression made by rough sounds in succession resembles that made by rough or tumultuous motion ; and on the other hand, the impression of smooth sounds resembles that of gentle motion.

*Two craggy rocks, projecting to the main,  
The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain ;  
Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide,  
And ships secure without their hausers ride.—Pope.*

Prolonged motion is well expressed by an Alexan-

drine verse. The following is an example of *slow* motion prolonged :

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.—*Pope.*

The next example is of *forcible* motion prolonged :

The waves behind impel the waves before,  
Wide-rolling, foaming high, and tumbling on the shore.—*Pope.*

The last is of *rapid* motion prolonged :

The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,  
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.—*Pope.*

A period consisting mostly of long syllables, produces an emotion which bears a faint resemblance to that excited by gravity and solemnity. Hence the beauty of the following verse.

Olli sedato respondit corde Latinus.—*Virgil.*

This enumeration might be extended to a much greater length ; but the examples which have been given, may serve as a foundation for the reader's further enquiries.

## CHAP. XI.

### OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN GENERAL.

FIGURES of speech always denote some departure from the simplicity of expression ; they enunciate, after a particular manner, the idea which we intend

to convey, and that with the addition of some circumstance designed to render the impression more strong and vivid. When I say, "A good man enjoys comfort in the midst of adversity," I express my thoughts in the simplest manner possible. But when I say, "To the upright there ariseth light in darkness," the same sentiment is expressed in a figurative style: a new circumstance is introduced; light is substituted for comfort, and darkness is used to suggest the idea of adversity.

The use of figurative language has been visited with heavy censure by a very distinguished philosopher. "Since wit and fancy," says Locke, "finds easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, figurative speeches, and allusion in language, will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or abuse of it. I confess, in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them, can scarce pass for faults. But yet, if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetorick, besides order and clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheat: and therefore however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or person that makes use of them.



What, and how various they are, will be superfluous here to take notice; the books of rhetoric, which abound in the world, will instruct those who want to be informed: only I cannot but observe, how little the preservation and improvement of truth and knowledge is the care and concern of mankind; since the arts of fallacy are endow'd and preferred. 'Tis evident how much men love to deceive, and be deceived, since rhetoric, that powerful instrument of error and deceit, has its established professors, is publicly taught, and has always been had in great reputation: and I doubt not, but it will be thought great boldness, if not brutality in me to have said thus much against it. Eloquence, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it, to suffer it self ever to be spoken against. And 'tis in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving, wherein men find pleasure to be deceived.\*—This is a degree of severity more than philosophical. The passage seems to involve one obvious fallacy; namely, that eloquence must always be exerted in a bad cause: for if rhetoric is a powerful instrument of error and deceit, it must also be a powerful instrument of truth and justice. From the writings of the excellent author himself, figurative language is by no means excluded; and in this very passage we find him making a skilful use of comparison, one of the figures of rhetoric.

Though figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the most simple form of speech, we are not thence to infer that they imply any thing uncom-

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\* Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding, book iii. chap. x. p. 423. edit. Lond. 1706, fol.

mon or unnatural. This is so far from being the case, that, on many occasions, they are both the most natural, and the most common method of uttering our sentiments. It is impossible to compose any discourse without making frequent use of them; and there are indeed few sentences of any length which do not include some expression that may be termed figurative. Figures are therefore to be accounted part of that language which nature dictates to mankind: they are not the invention of the schools, or the mere product of study; on the contrary, the most illiterate speak in figures, as often perhaps as the most learned. Whenever the imagination of the vulgar is powerfully awakened, or their passions highly inflamed, they will pour forth a torrent of figurative language as forcible as could be employed by the most artificial declaimer.

“When we attend,” says Dr. Ferguson, “to the language which savages employ on any solemn occasion, it appears that man is a poet by nature. Whether at first obliged by the mere defects of his tongue, and the scantiness of proper expressions, or seduced by a pleasure of the fancy in stating the analogy of its objects, he clothes every conception in image and metaphor. ‘We have planted the tree of peace,’ says an American orator; ‘we have buried the axe under its roots: we will henceforth repose under its shade; we will join to brighten the chain that binds our nations together.’ Such are the collections of metaphor which those nations employ in their public harangues. They have likewise already adopted those lively figures, and that daring freedom of language, which the learned have afterwards found so well fitted to

express the rapid transitions of the imagination, and the ardours of a passionate mind.”\*

Bishop Percy has thus stated the prevalence of metaphorical language in the ancient poets of the north: “That daring spirit and vigour of animation which distinguished the northern warriors, naturally inclined them to bold and swelling figures: and as their mythology was grown very extensive and complicated, the frequent allusions to it could not but be a greater source of obscurity to modern readers. It was the constant study of the northern Scalds to lift their poetic style as much as possible above that of their prose: so that they had at length formed to themselves in verse a kind of new language, in which every idea was expressed by a peculiar term, never admitted into their ordinary converse. Some of these terms are founded on their mythology, or the fabulous history of their gods; and others on some fancied analogy or resemblance. Thus if an Islandic poet had occasion to mention a rainbow, he called it ‘the bridge of the gods;’ if gold, ‘the tears of Freya;’ if poesy, ‘the gift of Odin.’ The earth was indifferently termed ‘Odin’s spouse,’ ‘the daughter of night,’ or ‘the vessel that floats on the ages:’ in like manner a battle was to be styled ‘the bath of blood,’ ‘the storm of Odin,’ or ‘the clash of bucklers;’ the sea, ‘the field of pirates,’ or ‘the girdle of the earth.’ Ice was not insignificantly named ‘the greatest of bridges;’ a ship, ‘the horse of the waves.’”†

\* Ferguson’s Essay on the History of Civil Society, p. 264. Edin. 1767, 4to.

† Percy’s Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, translated from the Islandic Language, pref. Lond. 1763, 8vo.



Dr. Beattie remarks that "savages, illiterate persons, and children, have comparatively but few words in proportion to the things they may have occasion to speak of; and must therefore recur to tropes and figures more frequently than persons of copious elocution. A seaman, or mechanic, even when he talks of that which does not belong to his art, borrows his language from that which does; and this makes his diction figurative to a degree that is sometimes entertaining enough."\*

What then is it that has drawn the attention of critics and rhetoricians so much to these forms of speech? They remarked that in them consists much of the beauty and force of language, and found them always to bear some character or distinguishing marks, by the help of which they could reduce them under separate classes. To this perhaps they owe their name. As the figure or shape of one body distinguishes it from another, so each of those forms of speech has a cast peculiar to itself, which both distinguishes it from the rest, and from the simple form of expression. Simple expression just makes our ideas known to others; but figurative language bestows a particular dress upon those ideas; a dress which serves to distinguish and adorn them.

Figures in general may be described to be that language which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the passions. Rhetoricians commonly divide

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\* Beattie's *Essay on Poetry and Music*, p. 236, 3d edit. Lond. 1779, 8vo.—See likewise Dr. Leland's *Dissertation on the Principles of Human Eloquence*, p. 3. Lond. 1764, 4to.



them into two great classes, figures of words, and figures of thought. The former are denominated tropes: they consist in the employment of a word to signify something different from its original and primitive meaning; so that by altering the word, we destroy the figure. Thus in the instance lately adduced, the trope consists in "light and darkness" being not used in a literal sense, but substituted for "comfort and adversity," on account of some resemblance or analogy which they are supposed to bear to those conditions of life. The other class, termed figures of thought, supposes the words to be employed in their proper and literal meaning, and the figure to consist in the turn of the thought. This is the case with personifications and apostrophes; where, though we vary the words which are used, or translate them from one language into another, we may still preserve the same figure. The distinction however is of very little importance; nothing can be built upon it in practice, nor can it always be clearly observed. Provided we remember that figurative language imports some colouring of the imagination, or some emotion or passion, expressed in our style, it is a matter of inferior consequence, whether we give to some particular mode of expression the name of a trope or of a figure. "Tropes and figures," says Dr. Ward, "are distinguished from each other in several respects. Tropes mostly affect single words, but figures whole sentences. A trope conveys two ideas to the mind by means of one word, but a figure throws the sentence into a different form from the common and usual manner of expression. Besides, tropes are

chiefly designed to represent our thoughts, but figures our passions.”\*

As it would be tedious to dwell on all the variety of figurative expressions which rhetoricians have enumerated,† I shall only select such figures as most frequently occur. The principles and rules laid down concerning them will sufficiently direct us to the use of the rest, either in prose or poetry.‡

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## CHAP. XII.

### OF PERSONIFICATION.

THE boldest effort of the imagination seems to be that which bestows sensibility and voluntary motion upon things inanimate.§ At first view, one would be disposed to conclude that this figure borders on

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\* Ward’s System of Oratory, vol. i. p. 384. Lond. 1759, 2 vols. 8vo.—John Ward, LL.D. the learned professor of rhetoric in Gresham College, is the author of another work connected with our present enquiries: it is entitled “Four Essays upon the English Language.” Lond. 1758, 8vo.

† Vossii Institutiones Oratoriae, tom. ii. p. 81. edit. Lugd. Bat. 1643, 2 tom. 4to. Ward’s System of Oratory, vol. i. p. 398, to vol. ii. p. 109.

‡ Many curious observations respecting the nature of figurative language, occur in Beccaria’s *Ricerche intorno alla Natura dello Stile*. Milano, 1770, 8vo.

§ Of *prosopopœia* or personification, an ancient rhetorician has given the following account, which partly applies to apostrophe: “Hoc fit cum personas in rebus constituimus, quæ sine personis sunt, aut eorum hominum, qui fuerunt, tanquam vivorum et præsen-

the extravagant or ridiculous; for what can seem more remote from the tract of reasonable thought, than to speak of stones, trees, fields, and rivers, as if they were living creatures, and to attribute to them thought and sensation, action and affection? This would appear to be nothing more than childish conceit which no person of taste could relish. The case however is very different: no such ridiculous effect is produced by personification, when judiciously managed; on the contrary, it is found to be natural and agreeable. Nor is any very uncommon degree of passion required to make us relish it: into every species of poetry it gains an easy admission; it is by no means excluded from prose, and even in common conversation it not unfrequently finds a place. Thus we do not hesitate to speak of a *furious* dart, a *deceitful* disease, the *thirsty* ground, the *angry* ocean. The use of such expressions shews the facility with which the mind can accommodate the properties of living creatures to inanimate objects, or to its own abstract ideas.

That our actions are too much influenced by passion, is an acknowledged truth; but it is not less certain that passion also possesses considerable influence over our perceptions, opinions, and belief. When by any animating passion, whether pleasant or painful, an impulse is given to the imagination, we are

tium actionem sermonemve deformamus." (Rutilius Lupus, de Figuris Sententiarum et Elocutionis, p. 89. edit. Ruhnkennii. Lugd. Bat. 1768, 8vo.) The best part of this volume is the very learned editor's *Historia critica Oratorum Græcorum*; which may likewise be found in the collection of his *Opuscula*, tom. i. p. 310. edit. Lugd. Bat. 1823, 2 tom. 8vo.

in that condition disposed to use every mode of figurative expression; and those figures are generally founded upon a momentary belief in some circumstance which calm and unclouded reason would represent in quite a different point of view. "A man agitated," says Dr. Beattie, "with any interesting passion, especially of long continuance, is apt to fancy that all nature sympathises with him. If he has lost a beloved friend, he thinks the sun less bright than at other times; and in the sighing of the winds and groves, in the lowings of the herd, and in the murmurs of the stream, he seems to hear the voice of lamentation. But when joy or hope predominates, the whole world assumes a gay appearance. In the contemplation of every part of nature, of every condition of mankind, of every form of human society, the benevolent and pious man, the morose and the cheerful, the miser and the misanthrope, finds occasion to indulge his favourite passion, and sees, or thinks he sees, his own temper reflected back in the actions, sympathies, and tendencies of other things and persons. Our affections are indeed the medium through which we may be said to survey ourselves, and every thing else; and whatever be our inward frame, we are apt to perceive a wonderful congeniality in the world without us. And hence the fancy, when roused by real emotions, or by the pathos of composition, is easily reconciled to those figures of speech that ascribe sympathy, perception, and other attributes of animal life, to things inanimate, or even to notions merely intellectual."\*

\* Beattie's Essay on Poetry and Music, p. 255.



In the following example of personification, Almeria calls upon the earth to protect her from the unkindness of her father.

O Earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom,  
 And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon  
 Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield ;  
 Open thy bowels of compassion, take  
 Into thy womb the last and most forlorn  
 Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent ;  
 I have no parent else. Be thou a mother,  
 And step between me and the curse of him,  
 Who was—who was, but is no more a father ;  
 But brands my innocence with horrid crimes,  
 And, for the tender names of child and daughter,  
 Now calls me murderer and parricide. *Congreve.*

Plaintive passions are extremely solicitous for vent ; and a soliloquy frequently answers this purpose. But when such a passion becomes excessive, it cannot be gratified except by sympathy from others ; and if denied that consolation, it will convert even things inanimate into sympathizing beings.

Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom  
 Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth  
 The tear of sorrow from my bursting heart,  
 Farewell a while. *Home.*

Ah happy hills ! ah pleasing shade !  
 Ah fields below'd in vain,  
 Where once my careless childhood stray'd,  
 A stranger yet to pain !  
 I feel the gales that from ye blow,  
 A momentary bliss bestow ;  
 As waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
 My weary soul they seem to sooth,  
 And, redolent of joy and youth,  
 To breathe a second spring. *Gray.*

That such personification is derived from nature, will

not admit of the least doubt, when we consider that it is to be found in the poetical productions of the darkest ages, and most remote countries.

Another source of this figure is terror; which is communicated in thought to every surrounding object, even to those which are inanimate.

Go, view the settling sea. The stormy wind is laid; but the billows still tumble on the deep, and seem to fear the blast.—*Ossian*.

We naturally communicate our joy in the same manner.

As when to them who sail  
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow  
Sabean odour from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the Blest; with such delay  
Well pleas'd, they slack their course, and many a league  
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.—*Milton*.

In some of the above examples, the personification, if I mistake not, is so complete as to afford an actual, though momentary, conviction, that the objects introduced are possessed of life and intelligence. But it is evident, from numberless instances, that the personification is not always so perfect. It is often employed in descriptive poetry, without being intended to produce the same conviction.

O Winds of winter! list ye there  
To many a deep and dying groan?  
Or start ye, demons of the midnight air,  
At shrieks and thunders louder than your own?  
Alas! ev'n your unhallow'd breath  
May spare the victim fallen low;  
But man will ask no truce to death,  
No bounds to human woe. *Campbell.*

Come, gentle Spring! ethereal mildness, come,  
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,

While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower  
Of shadowing roses on our plains descend.—*Thomson.*

Now Summer with her wanton court is gone  
To revel on the south side of the world,  
And flaunt and frolic out the livelong day;  
While Winter rising pale from northern seas,  
Shakes from his hoary locks the drizzling rheum.—*Armstrong.*

Lo! how the Years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,  
All hand in hand do decently advance,  
And to my song with smooth and equal measure dance.

*Cowley.*

But look, the Morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.—*Shakespeare.*

Awake, ye West Winds, through the lonely dale,  
And, Fancy, to thy fairy bower betake!  
Even now with balmy freshness breathes the gale,  
Dimpling with downy wing the stilly lake;  
Through the pale willows faltering whispers wake,  
And Evening comes with locks bedropt with dew.—*Mickle.*

While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,  
Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners grey.

*Mason.*

Night, sable goddess! from her ebony throne,  
In rayless majesty now stretches forth  
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world.—*Young.*

In these instances, it may be presumed that the personification, either with the poet or his readers, does not amount to any conviction that the objects are endowed with intelligence. The winds, the seasons, years, morning, evening, twilight, and night, are not here understood to be sensible beings. The personification must therefore be referred to the imagination: the inanimate object is figured to be possessed of consciousness; but we are not even impressed with a momentary conviction that it is so in reality.

Ideas or fictions of imagination have the power of exciting emotions in the mind ; and when any inanimate object is, in imagination, supposed to be an intelligent being, it assumes an appearance of greater importance than when an idea is formed of it according to truth. In this case however the elevation is far from being equal to what it is when the personification amounts to actual conviction. Thus personification is of two kinds. The first, or nobler kind, may be termed passionate personification ; the other, or more humble, may be termed descriptive personification. Personification in mere description is seldom or never carried to the extent of conviction.

In the following passage, Dr. Darwin has elegantly given form and motion to a particular affection of the mind ; and this is indeed one of the most common personifications of poetry.

With pausing step, at night's refulgent noon,  
Beneath the sparkling stars, and lucid moon,  
Plung'd in the shade of some religious tower,  
The slow bell counting the departed hour,  
O'er gaping tombs where shed umbrageous yews  
On mouldering bones their cold unwholesome dew ;  
While low aerial voices whisper round,  
And moondrawn spectres dance upon the ground ;  
Poetic Melancholy loves to tread,  
And bend in silence o'er the countless dead ;  
Marks with loud sobs infantine sorrows rave,  
And wring their pale hands o'er their mother's grave ;  
Hears on the new-turned sod with gestures wild  
The kneeling beauty call her buried child ;  
Upbraid with timorous accents Heaven's decrees,  
And with sad sighs augment the passing breeze.\*

\* Darwin's Temple of Nature, p. 58. Lond. 1803, 4to.



Collins, a writer of true poetical genius, has thus personified an attribute of the mind :

O thou, who sitt'st a smiling bride  
 By valour's arm'd and awful side,  
 Gentlest of sky-born forms, and best ador'd !  
 Who oft with songs divine to hear  
 Winn'st from his fatal grasp the spear,  
 And hid'st in wreaths of flow'rs his bloodless sword ;  
 Thou who amidst the deathful field,  
 By godlike chiefs alone beheld,  
 Oft with thy bosom bare art found,  
 Pleading for him, the youth who sinks to ground ;  
 See, Mercy ! see, with pure and loaded hands  
 Before thy shrine my country's Genius stands,  
 And decks thy altar still, though pierc'd with many a wound.

Dunbar, an ancient Scottish poet of the highest order, has in a single distich exhibited a strong and simple personification of the passion of anger :

Than Yre come in with sturt and stryfe ;  
 His hand wes ay upoun his knyfe.\*

Dr. Grainger has produced a very poetical personification of solitude :

O Solitude, romantic maid,  
 Whether by nodding towers you tread,  
 Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,  
 Or hover o'er the yawning tomb,  
 Or climb the Andes' clifted side,  
 Or by the Nile's coy source abide,  
 Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,  
 From Hecla view the thawing deep,  
 Or, at the purple dawn of day,  
 Tadmor's marble wastes survey.

Mason's personification of death is scarcely inferior to any of these examples :

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\* Dunbar's Poems, vol. i. p. 50. Laing's edit. Edinb. 1834, 2 vols. 8vo.

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread,  
 That shook the earth with thund'ring tread?  
 'Twas Death.—In haste  
 The warrior past;  
 High tower'd his helmed head:  
 I mark'd his mail, I mark'd his shield,  
 I 'spy'd the sparkling of his spear,  
 I saw his giant arm the falchion wield;  
 Wide wav'd the bick'ring blade, and fir'd the angry air.

This figure admits of three different degrees; which it is necessary to remark and distinguish, in order to determine the propriety of its use. The first is when some of the properties or qualities of living creatures are ascribed to inanimate objects; the second, when those inanimate objects are introduced as acting like living creatures; and the third, when they are represented either as speaking to us, or as listening when we address them.

When this figure is used in its lowest degree, it raises the style so little, that it may be admitted into the most humble discourse. Such expressions as *furious* dart, *thirsty* ground, raise so slight a conviction of sensibility, if they raise any at all, that it may seem doubtful whether they ought not to be referred to some other figure. Still however such epithets are found to have a more powerful effect than those which are properly and literally applicable to the objects. This effect may be explained in the following manner. In the expression *angry ocean*, do we not tacitly compare the ocean in a storm to a man in wrath? It is by this tacit comparison that the expression acquires a force or elevation above what is found in an epithet proper to the object. This comparison, though only tacit, seems to exclude personi-

fication: by the very nature of comparison, the objects compared are kept distinct, and the native appearance of each is preserved. All that can be said concerning the subject is, that, with regard to such instances, it must depend upon the reader, whether they may be examples of personification, or merely of what is denominated a figure of speech. A reader of fancy will advance them to the former class; while, with a plain reader, they will remain in the latter.

The second degree of this figure is, when inanimate objects or abstract ideas are introduced acting like living creatures. Here we rise a step higher, and the personification becomes sensible. The strength of the figure depends upon the nature of the action which we attribute to those inanimate objects, and the particularity with which it is described.

Go to your Natural Religion; lay before her Mahomet, and his disciples, arrayed in armour and blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands who fell by his victorious sword. Shew her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirement; shew her the prophet's chamber; his concubines and his wives; and let her hear him allege revelation, and a divine commission, to justify his adultery and lust. When she is tired with this prospect, then shew her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men. Let her see him in his most retired privacies; let her follow him to the Mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God. Carry her to his table, and view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to his cross; let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* When Natural Religion has thus viewed both, ask her, Which is the Prophet of God? But her answer we have already had, when she saw

part of this scene, through the eyes of the centurion, who attended at the cross. By him she spoke, and said, *Truly this man was the Son of God.*—*Sherlock's Sermons.*

This is more than elegant; it is truly sublime. The whole passage is animated; and the figure rises at the conclusion, when Natural Religion, who before was only a spectator, is introduced as speaking by the centurion's voice. This is an instance of personification, carried as far as prose, even in its highest elevation, will admit.

The mythological personification in Dr. Smollett's *Ode to Independence* is managed with admirable effect; and this is indeed one of the noblest lyric poems in the English language.

The genius of our tongue affords us a material advantage in the use of this figure. All substantive nouns, except the proper names of creatures, male or female, are destitute of gender. By simply bestowing the masculine or feminine gender upon inanimate objects, we introduce personification. "When," says Mr. Harris, "we give them sex, by making them masculine or feminine, they are thenceforth personified; are a kind of intelligent beings, and become, as such, the proper ornament either of rhetoric or of poetry.

"Thus Milton:

The Thunder

Wing'd with red light'ning and impetuous rage,

Perhaps hath spent his shafts.

*P. Lost, i. 174.*

"The poet, having just before called the hail and thunder, God's ministers of vengeance, and so personified them, had he afterwards said *its* shafts for



*his* shafts, would have destroyed his own image, and approached withal so much nearer to prose.

“The following passage is from the same poem:

Should intermitted Vengeance arm again  
His red right hand.

P. L. ii. 173.

“In this place *his* hand is clearly preferable either to *hers* or *its*, by immediately referring us to God himself, the avenger.

“I shall only give one instance more, and quit this subject.

At his command th’ uprooted Hills retir’d  
Each to *his* place: they heard his voice and went  
Obsequious: Heaven *his* wonted face renew’d,  
And with fresh flowrets Hill and Valley smil’d. P. L. vi.

“Here all things are personified; the hills *hear*, the valleys *smile*, and the *face* of heaven is renewed. Suppose then the poet had been necessitated by the laws of his language to have said—Each hill retir’d to *its* place—Heaven renewed *its* wonted face—how prosaic and lifeless would these neuters have appeared; how detrimental to the *prosopopœia*, which he was aiming to establish! In all this therefore he was happy, that the language in which he wrote imposed no such necessity; and he was too wise a writer to impose it on himself.”\*

Personifications of this kind are extremely frequent in poetry, of which indeed they may almost be considered as the life and soul. We expect to find every thing animated in the descriptions of a poet who

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\* Harris’s *Hermes*, p. 59.—See likewise Tooke’s *Diversions of Purley*, part i. p. 63. Dr. Whately’s *Elements of Rhetoric*, p. 207. and Dr. Crombie’s *Etymology and Syntax of the English Language*, p. 38.

possesses a lively fancy. Homer is remarkable for the use of this figure: war, peace, darts, spears, towns, rivers, every thing, in short, is alive in his writings. The same is the case with Milton and Shakspeare. One of the greatest pleasures which we derive from poetry, is to find ourselves always in the midst of our fellows, and to see every thing feeling and acting like ourselves. This is perhaps the principal charm of the figurative style, that it introduces us into society with all nature, and interests us even in inanimate objects, by forming a connexion between them and us, through that sensibility which it ascribes to them.

It yet remains to treat of the highest degree of this figure; which consists in introducing inanimate objects and irrational beings not only as feeling and acting, but also as listening and speaking. Personification in this degree, though on several occasions far from being unnatural, is very difficult in the management. It is the boldest of all rhetorical figures: it is the style of strong passion only; and therefore ought never to be attempted, unless when the mind is considerably heated and agitated. The introduction of some object inanimate, acting as if it had life, can be relished by the mind in the midst of cool description; but we must be in a state of considerable emotion, before we can so far realize the personification of an insensible object, as to conceive it listening to what we say, or returning an answer to our address. All strong passions however have a tendency to produce this figure; not only love, anger, and indignation, but even those which are seemingly more depressing, such as grief, remorse, and melan-

choly. In the subsequent passage, a poet of exquisite talents introduces an address from "the insect youth."

Methinks I hear in accents low  
The sportive kind reply :  
Poor moralist ! and what art thou ?  
A solitary fly.  
Thy joys no glittering female meets,  
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,  
No painted plumage to display :  
On hasty wings thy youth is flown ;  
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—  
We frolic while 'tis May. *Gray.*

Having thus treated of the nature of personification, and of its different degrees, it remains to shew in what cases it may be introduced with propriety, when it is suitable, when unsuitable.

After a passionate personification is properly introduced, it ought to be confined to its distinct province, that of gratifying some predominant passion. Every sentiment which is unconnected with this design, ought to be rejected. The passion of love, for example, in a plaintive tone, may bestow a momentary life upon woods and rocks, to make them witnesses of the lover's constancy or distress ; but no passion will easily support a conviction so far stretched, that those woods and rocks should report that constancy or distress to others. It is not however safe to prescribe mechanical rules to transcendent genius, which will often establish rules by the success of its own daring efforts.

If extraordinary marks of respect to a person of low condition be ridiculous, not less so is the personification of a low subject. This rule chiefly re-

gards descriptive personification; for a subject can hardly be regarded as mean or low that is the cause of a violent passion: in that circumstance, at least, it must be of importance. No positive rules however can be assigned with regard to what objects should be selected, and what avoided; the ultimate appeal must always lie to the decision of taste. A poet of superior genius, possessing the power of inflaming the mind, may take liberties which would be dangerous in others. Homer does not appear extravagant in animating his darts and arrows;\* nor Thomson in animating the seasons, the winds, the rains, the dews. The latter of these poets even ventures to animate the diamond; and this he does with great propriety. But there are objects familiar and base, to which personification cannot properly descend.† In a composed state of mind, to animate a lump of matter even in the most rapid flight of fancy, degenerates into burlesque.

How now! what noise! that spirit's possessed with haste,  
That wounds the unresisting postern with these strokes.

*Shakspeare.*

The employment of descriptive personification requires a considerable degree of caution. A personage in tragedy, agitated by some strong passion, is

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\* See Aristoteles de Rhetorica, lib. iii. cap. xi.

† Æschylus, in the following passage of his tragedy of Agamemnon; v. 502. describes dust as the sister german of mud:

*Μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι κάσις*

*Πηλοῦ ξύνουρος διψία κόνις τάδε.*

In another tragedy (*Septem contra Thebas*, v. 479. edit. Schütz.) he describes smoke as the wavering sister of fire.

*Αἰγρὺν μέλαιναν, αἰόλην πυρὸς κάσιν.*



inspired with warm and lofty sentiments, and the reader catching fire by sympathy, relishes the boldest personifications; but a writer, even in the most lively description, ought to content himself with such figures of this kind as agree with the tone of mind inspired by the description. Nor is the lowest degree of personification to be admitted upon every occasion; for in plain narrative, the mind, serious and sedate, entirely rejects the figure. Upon certain occasions, a reader can even without passion imagine the winds to be animated; but still the winds are the subject, and any action ascribed to them contrary to their usual operation, appearing unnatural, seldom fails to banish the illusion. The reader's imagination, too far strained, refuses its aid; and the description becomes obscure, instead of being more luminous. In Campbell's Ode to Winter, the personification, though carried to a great extent, is managed with evident propriety and skill.

This figure requires to be used with greater moderation in prose than in poetry; for, in prose, the same assistance cannot be obtained for raising passion to its proper height by the force of numbers and the glow of style. Yet from this species of composition, addresses to objects inanimate are by no means excluded; they have their place in the loftier kind of oratory. A public speaker may on some occasions very properly address religion or virtue, or his country, or some city or province, which has perhaps suffered great calamities, or been the scene of some memorable event. But it ought to be remembered, that, as such addresses are among the highest efforts of eloquence, they should never be attempted,

unless by persons of more than ordinary genius. Of all frigid things, the most frigid are the awkward and unseasonable attempts sometimes made towards such kinds of personification, especially if they be long continued: we perceive the writer labouring to imitate the language of some passion which he neither feels himself, nor is capable of exciting in others.

Mr. Roscoe has remarked that "if the moderns excel the ancients in any department of poetry, it is in that now under consideration. It must not indeed be supposed that the ancients were insensible of the effects produced by this powerful charm. But it may safely be asserted, that they have availed themselves of this creative faculty much more sparingly, and with much less success, than their modern competitors. The attribution of sense to inert objects is indeed common to both; but the still bolder exertion which embodies abstract existence, and renders it susceptible of ocular representation, is almost exclusively the boast of the moderns."\*

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## CHAP. XIII.

### OF APOSTROPHE.

APOSTROPHE is a figure nearly allied to personification, with which it is sometimes confounded. It consists in bestowing an ideal presence upon real per-

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\* Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, vol. i. p. 357.

sons, either dead or absent. We address them as if they stood before us listening to the overflowing of our passion.

Strike the harp in praise of Bragela, whom I left in the isle of mist, the spouse of my love. Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock to find the sails of Cuchullin? The sea is rolling far distant, and its white foam shall deceive thee for my sails. Retire, for it is night, my love, and the dark winds sigh in thy hair. Retire to the hall of my feasts, and think of the times that are past; for I will not return till the storm of war is gone.—*Ossian*.

Never, O little flock! from which I was torn by the cruel fate of war, never shall I be unmindful of the sacred ties that united us, of the uninterrupted harmony which we enjoyed, and of those fruits of the Spirit, goodness, righteousness, and truth, which exhibited among you the most convincing proofs of the energy of the gospel. Never shall I forget that melancholy day on which I was separated from you, without one public opportunity of "commending you to God, and to his grace," without one affectionate expression, without one adieu.—*Brown's Sermons*.

In these examples, an address is made to persons that are absent; but addresses are also made to the dead.

Farewell, too little, and too lately, known,  
Whom I began to think and call my own;  
For sure our souls were near ally'd, and thine  
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine. *Dryden*.

Phillips! whose touch harmonious could remove  
The pangs of guilty pow'r and hapless love,  
Rest here, distress by poverty no more,  
Find here that calm thou gav'st so oft before;  
Sleep undisturb'd within this peaceful shrine,  
Till angels wake thee with a note like thine. *Johnson*.

Art thou, my Gregory, for ever fled?  
And am I left to unavailing woe?  
When fortune's storms assail this weary head,  
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow,  
Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go?  
No more thy soothing voice my anguish cheers;

Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,  
My hopes to cherish and allay my fears. *Beattie.*

Oh thou ! with whom my heart was wont to share  
From reason's dawn each pleasure and each care ;  
With whom, alas ! I fondly hoped to know  
The humble walks of happiness below ;  
If thy blest nature now unites above  
An angel's pity with a brother's love,  
Still o'er my life preserve thy mild controul,  
Correct my views, and elevate my soul. *Rogers.*

Departed spirits of the mighty dead !  
Ye that at Marathon and Leuctra bled !  
Friends of the world ! restore your swords to man,  
Fight in his sacred cause, and lead the van !  
Yet for Sarmatia's tears of blood atone,  
And make her arm puissant as your own !  
Oh ! once again to Freedom's cause return  
The patriot Tell, the Bruce of Bannockburn ! *Campbell.*

In all the preceding examples, the persons addressed are supposed to be either present, or at least to listen to the speakers.

It requires a less violent effort of imagination to suppose persons present who are absent or dead, than to animate insensible beings, and direct our discourse to them. This figure may therefore be introduced where personification in its highest degree would be improper. It must not however be employed except when the mind is in some measure under the dominion of passion.



## CHAP. XIV.

## OF HYPERBOLE.

THE hyperbole consists in magnifying or diminishing an object beyond reality. This figure is in common use both among the learned and unlearned. The human mind does not rest satisfied with the simple truth, but has a strong propensity to add or diminish.\* An object either very little or very great in its kind, strikes us with surprize; and this emotion forces upon the mind a momentary conviction that the object is greater or less than it is actually found to be: hence the hyperbole, which expresses that momentary conviction. A writer taking advantage of this natural delusion, enriches his description by the use of hyperboles, and the reader, even in his coolest moments, relishes that figure; he is sensible that it is the operation of nature upon a warm fancy.

Even in common conversation, hyperbolical expressions very frequently occur; *as swift as the wind, as white as snow*, and the like; and our ordinary forms of compliment are almost all of them extravagant hyperboles. Yet these exaggerated expressions scarcely strike us as hyperbolical: in an instant we make the proper abatement, and know how to form a just estimate. But when there is something striking and unusual in the form of a hyperbolical ex-

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\* Quinctilian. de Institut. Orator. lib. viii. cap. vi.

pression, it is exalted into a figure of speech which draws our attention.

It cannot have escaped observation, that a writer is generally more successful in magnifying by a hyperbole than in diminishing. A minute object contracts the mind, and fetters its powers; whereas a grand object dilates and inflames the mind.

The following quotations will exemplify the manner in which this figure is used.

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.—*Genesis*.

Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair!  
Which way I fly is Hell: myself am Hell;  
And in the lowest deep a lower deep  
Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide  
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven. *Milton.*

Swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.—*Pope.*

Longinus quotes from some comic poet the following ludicrous instance of a diminishing hyperbole: "He possessed a field, of smaller extent than a Lacedemonian letter."\*

I. A hyperbole should never be introduced in the description of any thing ordinary or familiar. In such a case, it is altogether unnatural.

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\* Longinus de Sublimitate, § xxxviii. p. 132. edit. Weiske.

Ἄγρὸν ἔσχ' ἐλάττω γῆν ἔχοντ' ἄρ' ἐπιστολῆς  
Λακωνικῆς.

I saw him beat the surges under him,  
 And ride upon their backs : he trode the water ;  
 Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted  
 The surge most swoln that met him : his bold head  
 'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd  
 Himself with his good arms, in lusty strokes  
 To th' shore, that o'er his wave-born basis bow'd,  
 As stooping to receive him. *Shakspeare.*

II. A hyperbole cannot be introduced with propriety, until the mind of the reader is duly prepared. A figure of this kind, placed at the beginning of a work, is improper.

How far a hyperbole may be carried, and what is the proper measure and boundary of it, cannot be ascertained by any precise rule. Good sense and a cultivated taste must determine the point beyond which it will become extravagant. Longinus compares a hyperbole carried too far, to a bow-string which relaxes by overstraining, and produces an effect opposite to what is intended.

In single opposition hand to hand,  
 He did confound the best part of an hour  
 In changing hardiment with great Glendower.  
 Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,  
 Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood ;  
 Who then affrighted with their bloody looks,  
 Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,  
 And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,  
 Blood-stained with these valiant combatants.—*Shakspeare.*

England ne'er had a king until his time :  
 Virtue he had, deserving to command ;  
 His brandish'd sword did blind men with its beams ;  
 His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings ;  
 His sparkling eyes, replete with awful fire,  
 More dazzled, and drove back his enemies,  
 Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.—*Shakspeare.*

I found her on the floor  
In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful;  
Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,  
That were the world on fire, they might have drown'd  
The wrath of Heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin.—*Lee.*

With regard to the latter of these instances, the person herself who was under the distracting agitations of grief might be permitted to hyperbolize in this manner; but the person describing her cannot be allowed an equal liberty. The one is supposed to utter the sentiments of passion; the other speaks only the language of description, which, according to the dictates of nature, is always in a lower tone. This is a distinction which, however obvious, has not been observed by many writers.

III. A hyperbole, after it is introduced with every advantage, ought to be comprehended in as few words as possible. As it cannot be relished but in the confusion and swelling of the mind, a leisurely view dissolves the charm, and discovers the figure to be either extravagant or ridiculous.

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## CHAP. XV.

### OF COMPARISON.

THE situation in which man is placed, requires some acquaintance with the nature, power, and qualities, of those objects by which he is surrounded.



For acquiring a branch of knowledge so essential to our happiness and preservation, motives of interest and of reason are not alone sufficient; and nature has providentially superadded curiosity, a vigorous principle which is never at rest. This principle strongly attaches us to those objects which have the recommendation of novelty: it incites us to compare things together, for the purpose of discovering their differences and resemblances.

Resemblance between objects of the same kind, and dissimilitude between those of different kinds, are too obvious and familiar to gratify our curiosity in any degree: its gratification lies in discovering differences where resemblance prevails, and resemblances where difference prevails. Thus a difference in individuals of the same kind of plants or animals is deemed a discovery, while the many particulars in which they agree, are neglected; and in different kinds any resemblance is eagerly remarked, without attending to the many particulars in which they differ.

Objects of different senses cannot often be properly compared together; for they are totally separated from each other, and have no circumstance in common to admit either resemblance or contrast. Objects of hearing may be compared together, as also those of taste, of smell, and of touch: but objects of sight are the principal source of comparison; because in speaking or writing, things can only be compared in idea, and the ideas of sight are more distinct and lively than those of any other sense.

It must however be observed that two objects are sometimes happily compared together, though, strict-

ly speaking, they resemble each other in nothing. Though they are dissimilar, they yet agree in the effects which they produce upon the mind: they raise a train of similar or concordant ideas; so that the remembrance of the one serves to strengthen the impression made by the other.

The music of Carryl was, like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.—*Ossian*.

This seems happy and delicate; yet surely no kind of music bears any immediate resemblance to a feeling of the mind. Had it been compared to the voice of the nightingale, or the murmur of the stream, as it would have been by some ordinary poet, the likeness would have been more distinct; but, by founding his simile upon the effect which Carryl's music produced, the poet, while he conveys a very tender image, gives us, at the same time, a much stronger impression of the nature and strain of that music. The following similes are of the same description.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments.—*Psalms*.

Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal! it is like the sun of Cromla, when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds.—*Ossian*.

Often, like the evening sun, comes the memory of former times on my soul.—*Ossian*.

When a nation emerging from barbarism begins to cultivate the fine arts, the beauties of language cannot long lie concealed; but when discovered, they are generally, by the love of novelty, carried beyond all bounds of moderation. Thus, in the first poetical

efforts of every nation, we find metaphors and similes founded on the slightest and most distant resemblances. These, losing their grace with their novelty, wear gradually out of repute; and at length, on the improvement of taste, no metaphor or simile, except it be of a striking kind, is admitted into any polite composition. It is scarcely possible to discover the resemblances upon which the following comparisons are founded.

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely; thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins. - - Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.—*Song of Solomon.*

Young writers are very apt to employ a superfluity of comparisons and other figures. The following passage, which I quote from a promising poet who died at a premature age, may perhaps be considered as liable to this censure:

Belov'd of heaven, his fair Levina grew  
In youth and grace, the Naiad of the vale:  
Fresh as the flow'r amid the sunny show'rs  
Of May, and blither than the bird of dawn,  
Both roses' bloom gave beauty to her cheek,  
Soft temper'd with a smile. The light of heav'n,  
And innocence, illum'd her virgin-eye,  
Lucid and lovely as the morning star.

Her breast was fairer than the vernal bloom  
 Of valley-lily, op'ning in a show'r ;—  
 Fair as the morn, and beautiful as May,  
 The glory of the year, when first she comes  
 Array'd, all beauteous, with the robes of heav'n ;  
 And, breathing summer breezes, from her locks  
 Shakes genial dews, and from her lap the flowers.

*Bruce's Lochleven.*

Between an exemplification and a simile a difference is to be remarked. A simile is founded upon the discovery of likeness between two actions, in their general nature dissimilar, or of causes terminating by different operations in some resemblance of effect. But the mention of another like consequence from a like cause, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a simile, but an exemplification. It is not a simile to say, that the Thames waters fields, as the Po waters fields ; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Island, so Ætna vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace says of Pindar, that he pours his violence and rapidity of verse, as a river swoln with rain rushes from the mountain ; or of himself, that his genius wanders in quest of poetical decorations, as the bee wanders in quest of honey ; he, in either case, produces a simile : the mind is impressed with the resemblance of things generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if Pindar had been described as writing with the copiousness and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had informed us that he reviewed and finished his own poetry with the same care as Isocrates polished his orations, he would, instead of similitude, have exhibited almost identity ; he would have given the same portraits with different names. When Addison represents



the English as gaining a fortified pass, by repetition of attack, and perseverance of resolution, their obstinacy of courage and vigour of onset are well illustrated by the sea that breaks, with incessant battery, the dikes of Holland. This is a simile: but when the same author, after having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's person, tells us that "Achilles thus was formed with every grace," he does not employ a simile, but a mere exemplification. A simile may be compared to two lines converging at a point, and it is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance; an exemplification may be considered as two parallel lines, which run on together without approximation, never far separated, and never joined.\*

When comparisons are addressed to the understanding, their purpose is to instruct; when to the heart, to please. The latter of these purposes is accomplished by various means: first, by suggesting some unusual resemblance or contrast; secondly, by presenting an object in the strongest light; thirdly, by associating an object with others that are agreeable; fourthly, by elevating, and, fifthly, by depressing an object. Of the two following comparisons, the former seems intended to instruct, the latter to please.

As wax would not be adequate to the purpose of signature, if it had not the power to retain as well as to receive the impression, the same holds of the soul with respect to sense and imagination. Sense is its receptive power; imagination its retentive. Had it sense without imagination, it would not be as wax, but as water, where,

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\* Johnson's Lives of English Poets, vol. ii. p. 393.

though all impressions be instantly made, yet as soon as they are made they are instantly lost.—*Harris's Hermes.*

Yet, wand'ring I found on my ruinous walk,  
 By the dial-stone aged and green,  
 One rose of the wilderness left on its stalk,  
 To mark where a garden had been :  
 Like a brotherless hermit, the last of its race,  
 All wild in the silence of Nature it drew  
 From each wandering sunbeam a lonely embrace ;  
 For the night-weed and thorn overshadow'd the place  
 Where the flow'r of my forefathers grew. *Campbell.*

Dr. Akenside, one of the most classical of all the English poets, has drawn an elegant and pleasing simile from the ancient descriptions of the famous statue of Memnon at Thebes in Upper Egypt :

For as old Memnon's image, long renown'd  
 By fabling Nilus, to the quivering touch  
 Of Titan's ray, with each repulsive string  
 Consenting, sounded through the warbling air  
 Unbidden strains ; even so did nature's hand  
 To certain species of external things  
 Attune the finer organs of the mind :  
 So the glad impulse of congenial powers,  
 Or of sweet sound, or fair proportion'd form,  
 The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,  
 Thrills through imagination's tender frame  
 From nerve to nerve : all naked and alive  
 They catch the spreading rays ; till now the soul  
 At length discloses every tuneful spring,  
 To that harmonious movement from without  
 Responsive. *Pleasures of Imagination.*

Dr. Darwin, another ornament of the medical profession,\* has likewise drawn an illustration from the same poetical object :

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\* Γινώσκειν δ' οἶμαι τὸ καλῶς, ἱατρὸν ἔόντα,  
 Καὶ ταῖς ἐννεία δὴ πεφιλαμένον ἕξοχα Μοῖσαις.  
*Theocrit. Idyl. xi. 5.*

So to the sacred sun in Memnon's fane  
Spontaneous concords quired the matin strain.

*Botanic Garden.*

One of the means by which comparisons afford us pleasure, is the suggestion of some unusual resemblance or contrast. This remark it will be necessary to illustrate by particular instances.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark  
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief :  
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds  
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread  
Heaven's cheerful face, the low'ring element  
Scowls o'er the darken'd landscape snow and shower ;  
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet  
Extends his ev'ning beam, the fields revive,  
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds  
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

*Milton.*

Sweet are the uses of Adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in her head.

*Shakspeare.*

See how the Morning opes her golden gates,  
And takes her farewell of the glorious Sun :  
How well resembles it the prime of youth,  
Trimm'd like a yonker prancing to his love !

*Shakspeare.*

As the bright stars, and milky way,  
Shew'd by the night, are hid by day ;  
So we in that accomplish'd mind,  
Help'd by the night new graces find,  
Which, by the splendour of her view  
Dazzled before, we never knew.

*Waller.*

None of these similes, as they appear to me, tends to illustrate the principal subject ; and therefore the chief pleasure which they afford, must arise from suggesting resemblances that are not obvious.

The next effect of comparison, in the order men-

tioned, is to place an object in a conspicuous point of view.

Dr. Brown, in the subsequent passage, alludes to those who are under the influence of that false philanthropy which pursues unattainable beneficence, while it neglects the duty immediately incumbent, and the good that is at hand :

Persons of this character may be compared to those who ascend a lofty mountain, and overlooking every adjacent object, stretch their labouring sight to the remotest compass of vision. Tired at last with the attempt to descry the distant fading specks on the horizon, they return to the plain, and retain no recollection, either of the scenes that were immediately under their feet, or of the remote points which they discovered with difficulty.—*Brown's Sermons.*

The goddess appears ; for Poverty ever comes at the call : but, alas ! he finds her by no means the charming figure books and his own imagination had painted. As when an eastern bride, whom her friends and relations had long described as a model of perfection, pays her first visit, the longing bridegroom lifts the veil to see a face he had never seen before, but, instead of a countenance blazing with beauty like the sun, he beholds deformity shooting icicles to his heart ; such appears Poverty to her new entertainer.—*Goldsmith's Essays.*

There is a joy in grief when peace dwells with the sorrowful. But they are wasted with mourning, O daughter of Toscar, and their days are few. They fall away like the flower on which the sun looks in his strength, after the mildew has passed over it, and its head is heavy with the drops of night.—*Ossian.*

Why did not I pass away in secret, like the flower of the rock that lifts its fair head unseen, and strews its withered leaves on the blast !—*Ossian.*

She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek : she pin'd in thought,  
And with a green and yellow melancholy,  
She sat like Patience on a monument,  
Smiling at Grief.

*Shakspeare.*



Yet sadly it is sung, that she in shades,  
 Mildly as mourning doves, love's sorrow felt;  
 While in her secret tears her freshness fades,  
 As roses silently in lymbecks melt. *Davenant.*

As streams which with their winding banks do 'play,  
 Stopp'd by their creek, run softly through the plain;  
 So in th' ear's labyrinth the voice doth stray,  
 And doth with easy motion touch the brain.—*Davies.*

Fir'd at first sight with what the Muse imparts,  
 In fearless youth we tempt the height of arts,  
 While from the bounded level of our mind  
 Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;  
 But more advanc'd, behold, with strange surprise,  
 New distant scenes of endless science rise.  
 So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try,  
 Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky:  
 Th' eternal snows appear already past,  
 And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;  
 But these attain'd, we tremble to survey  
 The growing labours of the lengthen'd way:  
 Th' increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes;  
 Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise. *Pope.*

This last comparison, in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, is perhaps the best that English poetry can shew;\* but, as Mr. Headley suggests, one would be induced to suppose that Pope had seen and remembered the following lines of Drummond:†

Ah! as a pilgrim who the Alps doth passe,  
 Or Atlas temples crown'd with winter glasse,  
 The ayry Caucasus, the Apennine,  
 Pyrenes cliffs where sun doth never shine,  
 When he some craggy hills hath over-went,  
 Begins to thinke on rest, his journey spent,

\* Johnson's *Lives of English Poets*, vol. iv. p. 180.

† Headley's *Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 176. Lond. 1787, 2 vols. 8vo.

Till mounting some tall mountaine he do find  
 More lights before him than he left behind :  
 With halting pace so while I would me raise  
 To the unbounded limits of thy praise,  
 Some part of way I thought to have o'er-run,  
 But now I see how scarce I have begun,  
 With wonders new my spirits range possest,  
 And wandring waylesse in a maze them rest.\*

The long-demurring maid,  
 Whose lonely unappropriated sweets  
 Smil'd like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,  
 Not to be come at by the willing hand, *Blair's Grave.*

No simile, says Mr Pinkerton, can exceed this for pastoral and elegant simplicity.† It likewise tends to place the principal subject in the strongest light. The subsequent comparisons are also conceived with much felicity :

But hope and fear alternate sway my soul,  
 Like light and shade upon a waving field,  
 Coursing each other, when the flying clouds  
 Now hide and now reveal the sun of heaven.  
*Home's Alonzo.*

What though my winged hours of bliss have been,  
 Like angel-visits, few and far between ?  
*Campbell's Pleasures of Hope.*

This couplet is very elegant and striking: how far it is original, the following quotation will enable the reader to judge :

The good he scorn'd  
 Stalk'd off reluctant, like an ill-us'd ghost,  
 Not to return, or, if it did, its visits,  
 Like those of angels, short and far between.  
*Blair's Grave.*

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\* Drummond's Poems, p. 131. Lond. 1656, 8vo.

† Pinkerton's Letters of Literature, p. 283. Lond. 1785, 8vo.

Another effect of comparison is to embellish the principal subject by associating it with others that are of an interesting nature. Similes of this kind have also a separate effect; they diversify the narration by means of new images which are not strictly necessary to the comparison. They are short episodes, which, without drawing us from the principal subject, afford delight by their beauty and variety.

He scarce had ceas'd, when the superior fiend  
Was moving towards the shore : his pond'rous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,  
Behind him cast ; the broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At ev'ning from the top of Fesole,  
Or in Valdarno, to desery new lands,  
Rivers or mountains, in her spotty globe. *Milton.*

Wide must ye stand, in wild, disorder'd mood,  
As if the seeds from which your scyons sprang  
Had there been scatter'd from the affrighted beak  
Of some maternal bird whom the fierce hawk  
Pursued with felon claw. Her young meanwhile  
Callow, and cold, from their moss-woven nest  
Peep forth ; they stretch their little eager throats  
Broad to the wind, and plead to the lone spray  
Their famish'd plaint importunately shrill.

*Mason's English Garden.*

With regard to similes of this kind, it will readily occur to the reader that, when a resembling subject is once properly introduced, the mind is transitorily amused with the new object, and not dissatisfied with the slight interruption. Thus, in fine weather, the momentary excursions of a traveller for agreeable prospects or elegant buildings, cheer his mind, relieve him from the languor of uniformity, and without

much lengthening his journey in reality, shorten it greatly in appearance. A writer may however happen to make too long a digression; and in the opinion of some critics, Milton has more than once been guilty of this fault. The following quotation was probably intended as a burlesque of such long and digressive similes.

Not blacker tube, nor of a shorter size,  
Smokes Cambro-Briton (vers'd in pedigree,  
Sprung from Cadwalador and Arthur, kings  
Full famous in romantic tale) when he  
O'er many a craggy hill and barren cliff,  
Upon a cargo of fam'd Cestrian cheese,  
High over-shadowing rides, with a design  
To vend his wares, or at th' Arvonian mart,  
Or Maridunum, or the ancient town  
Yclep'd Brechinia, or where Vaga's stream  
Encircles Ariconium, fruitful soil !  
Whence flow nectareous wines, that well may vie  
With Massic, Setin, or renown'd Falern.

*Philips's Splendid Shilling.*

Comparisons which tend to aggrandize or elevate an object, are next to be exemplified.

As rusheth a foamy stream from the dark shady steep of Cromla, when thunder is rolling above, and dark brown night rests on the hill; so fierce, so vast, so terrible, rush forward the sons of Erin. The chief, like a whale of ocean followed by all its billows, pours valour forth as a stream, rolling its might along the shore.—*Ossian.*

Ten paces huge  
He back recoil'd ; the tenth on bended knee  
His massy spear upstaid ; as if on earth  
Winds under ground or waters forcing way,  
Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat,  
Half-sunk with all his pines.

*Milton.*

Methinks, king Richard and myself should meet  
With no less terror than the elements

Of fire and water, when their thund'ring shock  
At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heav'n.—*Shakspeare.*

In the last place, it was observed that a comparison may tend to lessen or depress an object. This is accomplished by assimilating the principal subjects to any thing low or despicable.

The overthrown he rais'd, and, as a herd  
Of goats or timorous flocks together throng'd,  
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursu'd  
With terrors and with furies to the bounds  
And crystal wall of heav'n, which opening wide,  
Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclos'd  
Into the wasteful deep ; the monst'rous sight  
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse  
Urg'd them behind ; headlong themselves they threw  
Down from the verge of heav'n. *Milton.*

Under this last subdivision, we must likewise class comparisons introduced for the sake of placing some object in a ridiculous point of view. Of these I shall now add a few examples.

I do here walk before thee, like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one.—*Shakspeare.*

The most accomplished way of using books at present, is to serve them as some men do lords, learn their titles, and then brag of their acquaintance.—*Swift's Tale of a Tub.*

Some think that the spirit is apt to feed on the flesh, like hungry wines upon raw beef.—*Swift on the Mechan. Oper. of the Spirit.*

Remark your commonest pretender to a light within, how dark, and gloomy, and dirty he is without ; as lanthorns, which the more light they bear in their bodies, cast out so much the more soot, and smoke, and fuliginous matter to adhere to the sides.—*Ibid.*

Some again think, that when our earthly tabernacles are disordered and desolate, shaken and out of repair, the spirit delights to dwell within them, as houses are said to be haunted when they are forsaken and gone to decay.—*Ibid.*



Here it may not be amiss to add a few words upon the laudable practice of wearing quilted caps. These, when moistened with sweat, stop all perspiration, and, by reverberating the heat, prevent the spirit from evaporating any way, but at the mouth; even as a skilful housewife that covers her still with a wet clout for the same reason, and finds the same effect.—*Swift on the Mechan. Oper. of the Spirit.*

Seminaries of learning, as well as particular shops, are sometimes frequented more on account of what they have been, than what they are: so many instances of this might be produced, that it seems to be a prevailing opinion in this island, that talents and genius, like cats, are more attached to particular walls and houses than to the persons who reside within them.—*Moore's Edward.*

Like cats in air-pumps, to subsist we strive  
On joys too thin to keep the soul alive.

*Young's Love of Fame.*

A comparison is sometimes implied where it is not formally expressed.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;  
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air. *Gray.*

I. A comparison must not be instituted between objects which bear too near and obvious a resemblance to each other. The great pleasure of the act of comparing lies in discovering likenesses between things of different species, where we could not, at the first glance, expect a resemblance. There is little

art or ingenuity in pointing out resemblances which cannot escape the most careless observer. When Milton compares Satan's appearance after his fall to that of the sun suffering an eclipse, and affrighting the nations with portentous darkness, we are struck with the happiness and the dignity of the similitude: but when he compares Eve's bower in Paradise to the arbour of Pomona, or Eve herself to a Dryad, or Wood-nymph, we receive little entertainment; every person sees that, in several respects, one arbour must of course resemble another arbour, and one beautiful woman another beautiful woman.

II. As comparisons ought not to be founded on likenesses too obvious, still less ought they to be founded on those which are too faint and remote. When differences or resemblances are carried beyond certain bounds, they appear slight and trivial; and for that reason will not be relished by persons of taste. The following instance will probably amuse the reader: it is a quotation, not from a poet or orator, but from a grave author writing an institute of law.

Our student shall observe that the knowledge of the law is like a deep well, out of which each man draweth according to the strength of his understanding. He that reacheth deepest, he seeth the amiable and admirable secrets of the law, wherein I assure you the sages of the law in former times (whereof Sir William Herle was a principal one) have had the deepest reach. And as the bucket in the depth is easily drawn to the uppermost part of the water, (for *nullum elementum in suo proprio loco est grave,*) but take it from the water, it cannot be drawn up but with a great difficulty; so, albeit beginnings of this study seem difficult, yet when the professor of the law can dive into the depth, it is delightful, easy, and without any heavy burthen, so long as he keeps himself in his own proper element.—*Coke on Littleton.*

This mode of stretching comparisons is admirably exposed in the following passage.

*Fuellen.* I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is porn : I tell you, Captain, if you look in the maps of the orld, I warrant you shall find in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon, and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth : it is called Wye at Monmouth, but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river ; but 'tis all one, 'tis so like as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both. If you mark Alexander's life well, Harry of Monmouth's life is come after it indifferent well ; for there is figures in all things. Alexander, God knows, and you know, in his rages, and his furies, and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods, and his displeasures, and his indignations, and also being a little intoxicates in his prains, did, in his ales and his angers, look you, kill his pest friend Clytus.

*Gower.* Our king is not like him in that ; he never kill'd any of his friends.

*Fuellen.* It is not well done, mark you now, to take the tales out of my mouth, ere it is made an end and finished. I speak but in the figures and comparisons of it : As Alexander is kill his friend Clytus, being in his ales and his cups, so also Harry of Monmouth, being in his right wits and his goot judgments, is turn away the fat knight with the great pelly doublet : he was full of jests, and gypes, and knaveries, and mocks ; I am forget his name.

*Gower.* Sir John Falstaff.

*Fuellen.* That is he : I can tell you, there is goot men porn at Monmouth.—*Shakspeare's Henry V. act iv. sc. vii.*

III. The object from which a comparison is drawn, should never be one of which but few readers or hearers can form clear and distinct ideas. Comparisons are introduced for the sake of throwing light on the subject ; and we must therefore be upon our guard, not to employ, as the ground of our simile, any object which is either too obscure or unknown. That which is used for the purpose of illustrating some other object, ought certainly to be more ob-

vious and plain than the object intended to be illustrated. Comparisons therefore founded on philosophical discoveries, or on any thing with which persons of a certain profession only are acquainted, do not produce their proper effect in any work intended for the public at large. They should be taken from those illustrious, noted objects, which the majority of readers either have seen, or can strongly conceive.

IV. A writer of delicacy will avoid drawing his comparisons from any image that is nauseous, ugly, or remarkably disagreeable; for, however striking the resemblance may be, the reader will be more strongly affected with sensations of disgust, than with those of pleasure.

V. Profane comparisons are liable to a more serious objection. The following passage in Logan's tragedy of Runnamede can scarcely escape the charge of profanity; nor am I disposed to think, with his anonymous biographer, that the grandeur of the figure sufficiently atones for its extravagance.\*

To me!—I meant not to declare my birth

Till I had proved it. I have ever been

Discovered by my deeds: like him in heaven,

Who in the majesty of darkness dwells,

But sends the thunder to reveal the God.

VI. The strongest literary objection which can be urged against a comparison, is, that it consists in

\* Life of Logan (p. xxx.) prefixed to his Poems. Edinb. 1812, 8vo.

words only, not in sense. Such false coin is suitable in the burlesque; but it is far beneath the dignity of the epic, or of any serious composition. It is disputed among critics, whether the following simile be of this description:

The noble sister of Poplicola,  
The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle  
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,  
And hangs on Dian's temple. *Shakspeare.*

In the opinion of Goldsmith, "this is no more than illustrating a quality of the mind, by comparing it with a sensible object. If there is no impropriety in saying such a man is true as steel, firm as a rock, inflexible as an oak, unsteady as the ocean, or, in describing a disposition, cold as ice, or fickle as the wind; and these expressions are justified by practice; we shall hazard an assertion, that the comparison of a chaste woman to an icicle is proper and picturesque, as it obtains only in the circumstances of cold and purity; but that the addition of its being curdled from the purest snow and hanging on the temple of Diana, the patroness of virginity, heightens the whole into a most beautiful simile."\*

"There is," says Lord Kames, "evidently no resemblance between an icicle and a woman, chaste or unchaste: but chastity is cold in a metaphorical sense; and this verbal resemblance, in the hurry and glow of composing, has been thought a sufficient

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\* Goldsmith's *Essays and Criticisms*, vol. ii. p. 216. Lond. 1793, 3 vols. 12mo.



foundation for the simile. Such phantom similes are mere witticisms, which ought to have no quarter, except where purposely introduced to provoke laughter.<sup>18</sup>

## CHAP. XVI.

### OF METAPHOR.

ONE of the most pleasing exercises of the imagination, is that in which it is employed in comparing distinct ideas, and discovering their various resemblances. There is no simple perception of the mind that is not capable of an infinite number of considerations in reference to other objects; and it is in the novelty and variety of those unexpected connexions, that the richness of a writer's genius is chiefly displayed. A vigorous and lively fancy does not tamely confine itself to the idea which lies before it, but looks beyond the immediate object of its contemplation, and observes how it stands in conformity with numberless others. It is the prerogative of the human mind thus to bring its images together, and compare the several circumstances of similitude which attend them. By these means eloquence exercises a kind of magic power; it can raise innumerable beauties

\* Kames's Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. p. 218, 5th edit. Edinb. 1774, 2 vols. 8vo.

from the most barren subjects, and impart the grace of novelty to the most common. The imagination is thus kept awake by the most agreeable emotion, and entertained with a thousand different views both of art and nature, which still terminate at the principal object. For this reason, the metaphor is generally preferred to the simile, as a more pleasing mode of illustration. In the former, the action of the mind is less languid, as it is employed at the very first instant in comparing the semblance with the object which it represents; whereas in the latter, its operations are more slow, as it must first contemplate the principal object, and afterwards the corresponding image.

A metaphor differs from a simile in form only, not in substance, comparison being the foundation of both. In a simile, the two subjects are kept distinct in the expression, as well as in the thought; in a metaphor, they are kept distinct in the thought, but not in the expression. A hero resembles a lion; and upon that resemblance many similes have been founded by Homer and other poets. But let us invoke the aid of the imagination, and figure the hero to be a lion, instead of only resembling one; by that variation the simile is converted into a metaphor, which is supported by describing all the qualities of the lion that resemble those of the hero.\* The poet, by figuring his hero to be a lion, proceeds to describe the lion in appearance, but in reality he is all the while describing the hero; and his description becomes peculiarly beautiful, by expressing the virtues

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\* Aristoteles de Rhetorica, lib. iii. cap. iv.

and qualities of the hero in terms which properly belong not to him, but to the lion. When I say of some great minister, "that he upholds the state like a pillar which supports the weight of a whole edifice," I evidently frame a comparison; but when I say of the same minister, "that he is a pillar of the state," this is not a comparison but a metaphor. The comparison between the minister and a pillar is instituted in the mind, but without the aid of words which denote comparison. The comparison is only insinuated, not expressed; the one object is supposed to be so like the other, that, without formally drawing the comparison, the name of the one may be substituted for that of the other.

A metaphor always implies comparison, and is, in that respect, a figure of thought; yet, as the words in which it is conveyed are not taken literally, but changed from their proper to a figurative sense, the metaphor is commonly ranked among tropes, or figures of words. But provided the nature of it be well understood, it is of little importance whether we denominate it a trope or a figure.

"The description of natural objects," says the ingenious and elegant Mr. Roscoe, "awakes in the poet's mind corresponding emotion; as his heart warms, his fancy expands, and he labours to convey a more distinct or a more elevated idea of the impressions of his own imagination. Hence the origin of figures, or figurative language; in the use of which he aims at describing his principal subject, by the qualities of some other object more generally known, or more striking in its nature. These figures of poetry have furnished the philologists of ancient and modern



times with a great variety of minute distinctions, but many of them consist rather in form than in substance; comparison, express or implied, will be found to be the essence of them all."\*

Although the word metaphor has been confined to the expression of resemblance between two objects, yet it is sometimes used in a looser and more extended sense: it denotes the application of a term in any figurative signification, whether the figure be founded on resemblance, or on some other relation which two objects bear to each other. When grey hairs are substituted for old age, some writers would call this a metaphor, though in propriety of language it is only what rhetoricians term a metonymy; that is, the effect for the cause. Grey hairs are the effect of old age, but they do not bear any resemblance to old age.

Every writer ought to become a painter as far as the subject which he treats will permit him. Our thoughts are susceptible of different colourings: taken separately, each has a colour proper to itself; when combined, they lend each other mutual light and shade; and the art of the writer consists in delicately tracing their reflected tints.† Of all the figures of speech, none approaches so near to painting as metaphor: its peculiar effect is to add light and strength to description; to render intellectual ideas visible to the eye, by giving them colour, and substance, and sensible qualities. To produce this effect however, a very delicate hand is required; for, by the smallest degree of inaccuracy, we are in danger of

\* Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. i. p. 347.

† Condillac, *Traité de l'Art d'écrire*, liv. iii. chap. vi.

introducing confusion, instead of promoting perspicuity. There is nothing in which a fine writer is so much distinguished from one of an ordinary class, as in the conduct and application of this figure. He is at liberty to range through the whole compass of creation, and collect his images from every object which surrounds him: but although he may thus be amply furnished with materials, great judgment is required in selecting them; for, to render a metaphor perfect, it must be not only apposite, but pleasing; it must entertain, as well as enlighten.

I. Metaphors should be suited to the nature of the subject of which we treat; neither too many, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it; that we may neither attempt to force the subject, by means of them, into a degree of elevation which is not consistent with it; nor, on the other hand, allow it to sink below its proper dignity.\* These directions apply to figurative language in general, and should always be kept in view. Some metaphors are allowable, and even beautiful, in poetry, which it would be absurd to employ in prose: some may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in historical or philosophical composition. Figures are the dress of our sentiments.

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\* Mr. Gilchrist is of opinion that the metaphoric mania is probably "at the height, and that a reaction will soon commence in favour of literal simplicity; such as that which followed the figurative era of Jeremy Taylor. No rage lasts long. The rhetorical taste of a people is ever vibrating from one extreme to another. Though the imagination predominates over the understanding, the cultivated mind is at last surfeited with imagery." (*Etymologic Interpreter*, p. 248. Lond. 1824, 8vo.)



There is a natural congruity between the dress and the character or rank of the person by whom it is worn. The same is the case with regard to figures and sentiments. The excessive or unseasonable employment of figures is mere foppery in writing: it gives a puerile air to composition, and diminishes rather than exalts the dignity of a subject. For as, in real life, true dignity is founded on character, not on dress and parade, so the dignity of composition must arise from intelligence and thought, not from ornament. A similar sentiment is happily inculcated by a very able writer, in one of his masterly sermons. "There is," says Dr. Brown, "a certain taste in character and in moral judgment, as well as in the fine arts, which can be acquired only by a sound understanding, improved by extensive observation, and by opportunities of contemplating the best models of virtue which our present degraded and miserable state can afford. Striking, but incoherent design, tumid and extravagant diction, passion affected and ill-placed, glaring colouring, and meretricious ornament of every kind, are, by uncultivated minds, preferred to the just proportion, the modest simplicity, and the chaste elegance of nature."

Figures and metaphors should, upon no occasion, be scattered with too profuse a hand; and they should never be incongruous with the train of our sentiment. Nothing can be more unnatural than for a writer to carry on a process of reasoning, in the same kind of figurative language which he would employ in description. When he reasons, we look only for perspicuity; when he describes, we expect embellishment; when he divides or relates, we desire

plainness and simplicity. One of the greatest secrets in composition, is to know when to be simple. This always lends a heightening to ornament, in its proper place. The judicious disposition of shade makes the light and colouring strike the more. He is truly eloquent, who can discourse of humble subjects in a plain style, who can treat important ones with dignity, and speak of things which are of a middle nature, in a temperate strain. For one who, upon no occasion, can express himself in a calm, orderly, distinct manner, but begins to be on fire before his readers are prepared to kindle along with him, has the appearance of a madman raving among persons who enjoy the use of their reason, or of a drunkard reeling in the midst of sober company.

The following quotation affords an instance of metaphorical language rising to bombast:

The bill underwent a great number of alterations and amendments, which were not effected without violent contest: at length however it was floated through both houses, on the tide of a great majority, and steered into the safe harbour of royal approbation.—*Smollett's Hist. of England.*

II. Metaphors should never be drawn from objects which are mean or disagreeable. Even when introduced to vilify and degrade any subject, an author should study never to be nauseous in his allusions; but in subjects of dignity, it is an unpardonable fault to employ metaphors which are mean and vulgar. All nature opens her stores to us, and admits us to gather from all sensible objects, whatever can illustrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and splendid objects of sense, but the grave, the ter-

rifying, and even the gloomy and dismal, may, on different occasions, be introduced into figures with propriety. But we must always be cautious and select in our choice.

The following passage seems to present a breach of this obvious rule:

Some bad poems carry their owners' marks about them, some brand or other on this *buttock* or that ear, that it is notorious who is the owner of the cattle.—*Dryden, Dedication of Juvenal.*

III. But, besides a certain decorum which is requisite to constitute a perfect metaphor, a writer of true taste and genius will always select the most obvious images, and place them in the most unobserved points of resemblance. Every metaphor should exhibit the appearance of having been led, not of having forced itself into the place of that word for which it is substituted; it should seem to have come thither of its own accord, and not by constraint. All allusions which point to the more abstruse branches of the arts or sciences, and with which none can be supposed to be acquainted but those who have penetrated far into the deeper studies, should be carefully avoided, not only as pedantic, but as impertinent: they pervert the use of this figure, and add neither grace nor force to the idea which they would elucidate. The most pleasing metaphors therefore are those which are derived from the most frequent occurrences of art or nature, or the civil transactions and customs of mankind. Thus how expressive, yet at the same time how familiar, is that image which Otway has put into the mouth of Metellus, in his tragedy of Caius Marius, where he calls Sulpitius

That mad bull whom Marius lets loose  
On each occasion, when he'd make Rome feel him,  
To toss our laws and liberties i' th' air.

The transgression of the above rules forms what are called harsh or forced metaphors. With metaphors of this kind, Jonson, Donne, Cowley, and other poets of the same class, abound. They seem to have considered it as the perfection of wit, to trace likenesses which no other person could have discovered; and at the same time they carry their metaphors so far, that it requires some ingenuity to comprehend them. Instead of illustrating the subject of which they treat, their metaphors frequently cast around it a cloud of impenetrable darkness.

Some writers endeavour to qualify the harshness of their metaphors by interposing such mitigating phrases as, *so to speak, as it were, if I may be allowed the expression*; and this method has received the sanction of Aristotle, Theophrastus, Longinus, Cicero, and Quintilian. Notwithstanding the authority of such great names, it must certainly be allowed that any of these phrases forms a very awkward parenthesis; and perhaps metaphors which require such an apology, would be better omitted.

IV. In constructing a metaphor, the writer ought to confine himself to the simplest expressions, and to make use of such words only as are literally applicable to the imagined nature of his subject. Figurative words ought carefully to be avoided; for such complicated figures, instead of placing the principal subject in a clear light, involve it in obscurity.



A stubborn and unconquerable flame  
 Creeps in his veins, and drinks the streams of life.—*Rowe.*

That a fever may be imagined a flame, it is not difficult to admit, though more steps than one are necessary to arrive at the resemblance: a fever, by heating the body, resembles fire; and it requires no effort to imagine a fever to be a fire: again, by a figure of speech, flame may be put for fire, because they are commonly conjoined; and therefore a fever may be termed a flame. But the effects of the fever ought nevertheless to be explained in words which apply to a flame in a literal sense. This rule however is not observed; for a flame only *drinks* figuratively, not properly.

I am convinced that the method of teaching which approaches most nearly to the method of investigation, is incomparably the best; since not content with serving up a few barren and lifeless truths, it leads to the stalk on which they grow.—*Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

The metaphor which occurs in the latter part of this sentence, is of the same description. Truth is here figured to be the fruit of a tree; but the epithet *lifeless* can only be applied metaphorically to fruits.

There is not a single view of human nature, which is not sufficient to extinguish the seeds of pride.—*Addison, Spectator.*

When a seed has lost its power of vegetation, we might say, in a metaphorical sense, it is extinguished: but when in the same sense we call that disposition of the heart which produces pride, the seed of passion, we cannot, without introducing a confusion of ideas, apply any word to seed, but what corresponds with its real properties or circumstances.



V. Different metaphors ought never to be blended together in the same sentence. The use of mixed metaphor is one of the grossest abuses of this figure. Some writers begin sentences with storms and tempests, and close them with fire and flames.

Though in their corrupt notions of divine worship, they are apt to multiply their gods, yet their earthly devotion is seldom paid to above one idol at a time, whose oar they pull with less murmuring and much more skill, than when they share the lading, or even hold the helm. —*Swift on the Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome.*

The most injudicious writer could not have been betrayed into a more absurd inconsistency of metaphor. The favourite of the people is first an idol; and in the very next clause, he is figured to be a vessel. What connexion is there between worshipping and rowing, and who ever heard before of pulling the oar of an idol?

Women were formed to temper mankind, not to set an edge upon their minds, and blow up in them those passions which are apt to rise of their own accord. —*Addison, Spectator.*

The act of setting an edge, and the act of blowing up, bear no analogy to each other.

The charm dissolves apace,  
And as the morning steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle  
Their clearer reason. *Shakspeare.*

So many ill-consorted ideas are here brought together, that the mind can see nothing clearly;—the morning stealing upon the darkness, and at the same time melting it; the senses of men chasing fumes, and fumes that mantle.

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art  
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,  
 As is a winged messenger from heaven,  
 Unto the white upturned wondering eyes  
 Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,  
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,  
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.—*Shakspeare.*

Here the angel is represented at one instant as bestriding the clouds and sailing upon the air, and upon the bosom of the air. This forms a picture too confused for the imagination to comprehend.

All then is full, possessing and possest,  
 No craving void left aching in the breast.—*Pope.*

A void may, in a metaphorical sense, be said to crave; but can a void be said to ache?

I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,  
 That longs to launch into a nobler strain.—*Addison.*

To bridle a goddess is no very delicate idea; but why must she be bridled? because she longs to launch; an act which was never hindered by a bridle: and whither would she launch? into a nobler strain. In the first line she is a horse, in the second a boat; and the care of the poet is to keep his horse or his boat from singing.\*

The late marquis of Londonderry is said to have ornamented one of his speeches with the following tasteful assemblage of metaphors: "And now, Sir, I must embark into the feature on which this question chiefly hinges." This specimen of native eloquence is scarcely exceeded by another, which I have

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\* Johnson's Lives of English Poets, vol. ii. p. 390.

heard imputed to some holder-forth: "To hear such sounds, smells horribly in the eye of imagination."

Dr. Whately has remarked that "some are too fastidious on this point. Words, which by long use in a transferred sense, have lost nearly all their metaphorical force, may fairly be combined in a manner which, taking them literally, would be incongruous. It would savour of hypercriticism to object to such an expression as *fertile source*."\* But, without fearing to incur the imputation of hypercriticism, I will venture to suggest that *copious source* would answer all the purposes of the other expression.

A good rule has been suggested for examining the propriety of metaphors, when we suspect them to be of a mixed kind: we should consider what figure the image which they present to the mind would exhibit upon canvass. By this method, we should become sensible, whether incongruous circumstances were mixed, or the object was presented in one natural and consistent point of view.

VI. It is unpleasant to find a variety of metaphors joined in the same period, even where they are preserved distinct. The rapid transition distracts the mind; and the images are rendered too faint to produce any powerful effect upon the imagination.

VII. Metaphorical and proper expressions ought never to be so interwoven together, that part of the sentence must be understood figuratively, and part literally. The imagination cannot follow with suffi-

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\* Whately's Elements of Rhetoric, p. 210. Oxford, 1828, 8vo.



cient ease, changes so sudden and unprepared. A metaphor begun, and not carried on, has no beauty. Instances of such incorrect composition are without number; but I shall content myself with giving a single example.

When thus, as I may say, before the use of the loadstone, or knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than the pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the French stage among the moderns.—*Dryden, Dedication of Juvenal.*

Here the writer suddenly falls from the pole-star, and alights upon the French stage.

VIII. Metaphors should not be too far pursued. If the resemblance on which the figure is founded be traced through all its minute circumstances, we form an allegory instead of a metaphor; we fatigue the reader with this play of fancy, and likewise render our discourse obscure. This is called hunting a metaphor down. Lord Shaftesbury is sometimes guilty of pursuing his metaphors too far: fond, to an uncommon degree, of every decoration of style, when he has once started a figure which pleases him, he always seems unwilling to discontinue the chase. Thus, having represented soliloquy under the metaphor of a proper method of evacuation for an author, he pursues the figure through several pages, under all the forms of discharging crudities, throwing off froth and scum, bodily operation, taking physic, curing indigestion, giving vent to choler, bile, flatulencies, and tumours,\* till at last the idea becomes nauseous and disgusting.

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\* Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author.



IX. There is a double beauty in figures of this kind, when they are not only metaphors but allusions. Thus, a very original poet, speaking of the advantages of exercise in dissipating those gloomy vapours which are apt to hang upon some minds, employs the following image :

Throw but a stone, the giant dies.—*Greene.*

Here the metaphor is conceived with great propriety of thought, if we consider it only in its primary view ; but when we see it pointing still farther, and hinting at the story of David and Goliath, it receives a very considerable improvement from the double application.

Several examples of impropriety in the use of metaphor have been pointed out : we shall now turn to the contemplation of examples of a different kind.

'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,  
And coming events cast their shadows before.—*Campbell.*

Oh ! when the growling winds contend, and all  
The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm,  
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din  
Howl o'er the steady battlements. *Armstrong.*

Here the word *fluctuates* is used with admirable efficacy : it not only exhibits an image of struggling, but also echoes to the sense.\* The metaphor, which is simple and consistent, depends upon the resemblance between the waves of the sea, and the violent agitation of trees during a storm.

Talents, disjoined from kindness, meekness, and charity, are not

\* Goldsmith's *Essays and Criticisms*, vol. ii. p. 201.

those glorious luminaries that shed their benignant influence on earth, but the glaring lightning that alarms, and blasts, and ravages whatever is placed in its way.—*Brown's Sermons.*

I have sometimes considered the bosom of an old maid as a kind of cell, in which it was intended that the lively bee, affection, should treasure up its collected sweets; but this bee happening to perish, before it could properly settle on the flowers that should afford its wealth, the vacant cell may unluckily become the abode of that drone indifference, or of the wasp malignity.—*Hayley's Essay on Old Maids.*

I consider Chaucer as a genial day in an English spring. A brilliant sun enlivens the face of nature with an unusual lustre: the sudden appearance of cloudless skies, and the unexpected warmth of a tepid atmosphere, after the gloom and the inclemencies of a tedious winter, fill our hearts with the visionary prospect of a speedy summer; and we fondly anticipate a long continuance of gentle gales and vernal serenity. But winter returns with redoubled horrors: the clouds condense more formidably than before; and those tender buds, and early blossoms, which were called forth by the transient gleam of a temporary sun-shine, are nipped by frosts, and torn by tempests.—*Warton's History of English Poetry.*

In the last of these examples, the metaphorical language is perhaps carried to as great an extent as could safely be attempted in such a composition; and yet it is uniformly supported with taste and propriety. The next paragraph begins with a sentence which renders the previous metaphor intelligible to the plainest reader: "Most of the poets that immediately succeeded Chaucer, seem rather relapsing into barbarism, than availing themselves of those striking ornaments which his judgment and imagination had disclosed."

Addison, in his well-known criticism on *Paradise Lost*, is taking notice of those changes of nature which the author of that divine poem describes as immediately succeeding the fall. Among other prodigies,

Milton represents the sun in an eclipse, and at the same time a bright cloud in the western regions of the heavens descending with a band of angels. The critic, to shew his author's art and judgment in the conduct and disposition of this sublime scenery, employs the following metaphor:

The whole theatre of nature is darkened, that this glorious machine may appear in all its lustre and magnificence.

Here the figure is beautiful and expressive.

In the following passage, the noble author alludes to the behaviour of Charles the First to his last parliament:

About a month after their meeting, he dissolved them; and as soon as he dissolved them, he repented; but he repented too late of his rashness. Well might he repent; for the vessel was now full, and this last drop made the waters of bitterness overflow. Here we draw the curtain, and put an end to our remarks.—*Bolingbroke's Remarks on the History of England.*

Nothing could be more happily conducted. A figure of this kind, judiciously managed, forms a spirited and dignified conclusion to a subject: the author retires with a good grace, and leaves a strong impression on the reader's mind.

The judicious use of metaphor serves to add light to the expression, and energy to the sentiment: but, on the contrary, when this figure is unskilfully employed, it tends effectually to cloud the sense; and, upon some occasions, it may even tend to conceal the author's want of meaning. This may happen, not only when there is in the same sentence a mixture of discordant metaphors, but also where the metaphori-

cal style is too long continued, or too far pursued. The reason is obvious. In common speech the words are the immediate signs of the thought. But here the case is different: for when a writer, instead of adopting such metaphors as naturally and opportunely present themselves, rummages the universe in quest of these flowers of oratory, and piles them one above another; when he cannot so properly be said to use metaphor, as to speak in metaphor, or rather from metaphor he runs into allegory, and thence into enigma; his words cannot be affirmed to be the immediate signs of his thoughts; they are the signs of the signs of his thoughts. His composition may then be termed what Spenser styles his *Faerie Queen*, "a perpetual allegory or dark conceit."

Writers that fall into this error, are often misled by a desire of flourishing on the several attributes of a metaphor which they have pompously ushered into their discourse, without taking the trouble to examine whether there be any qualities in the subject to which these attributes can with justice and perspicuity be applied. Of exuberance of metaphor I shall produce one example.

Men must acquire a very peculiar and strong habit of turning their eye inwards, in order to explore the interior regions and recesses of the mind, the hollow caverns of deep thought, the private seats of fancy, and the wastes and wildernesses, as well as the more fruitful and cultivated tracts of this obscure climate.—*Shaftesbury's Miscellaneous Reflections*.

Here the author, having determined to represent the human mind under the metaphor of a country, revolves in his thoughts the various objects which might be found in a country, but has never dreamed of con-



sidering whether there be any common points of resemblance between those subjects of his figure. Hence the strange parade he makes with *regions, recesses, hollow caverns, private seats, wastes, wildernesses, fruitful and cultivated tracts*; terms which, though they have an appropriate meaning as applied to a country, have no definite signification when applied to mind. Some objects may, without impropriety, be alluded to in a cursory manner, though they will become ridiculous by being too long tortured in a figure or trope. Thus, notwithstanding the impropriety of the passage now quoted from Shaftesbury, there is nothing reprehensible in the following distich, which contains a metaphor of the same nature and origin.

Farewell, for clearer ken design'd,  
The dim-discover'd tracts of mind.

*Collins.*

## CHAP. XVII.

### OF ALLEGORY.

AN allegory may be considered as a continued metaphor. It consists in representing one subject by another analogous to it: the subject thus represented is not formally mentioned, but we are left to discover it by reflection; and this furnishes a very pleasant exercise to our faculties.

There cannot be a finer or more correct allegory

than the following, in which the Jewish nation is represented under the symbol of a vineyard.

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. - - - Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.—*Psalms*.

Here we discover no circumstance that does not strictly agree with a vine; while at the same time, the whole quadrates happily with the Jewish state represented by this figure. It is the principal requisite in the conduct of an allegory, that the figurative and the literal meaning be not inconsistently mingled. If, instead of describing the vine as wasted by the boar out of the wood, and devoured by the wild beast of the field, the psalmist had said that it was afflicted by the heathen, or overcome by enemies, this would have ruined the allegory, and produced the same incoherence that has been remarked in those metaphors in which the figurative and literal senses are confounded. In an allegory, as well as a metaphor, such terms ought to be chosen as are literally applicable to the representative subject; nor ought any circumstance to be added which is not proper to that subject, however justly it may apply to the principal, either in a figurative or proper sense. Our view must never waver between the type and the antitype. Most of the rules which have been delivered with re-

gard to metaphors may also be applied to allegories, on account of the affinity which those figures bear to each other. The only material difference between them, besides the one being generally short, and the other more prolonged, is, that a metaphor always explains itself by the words which are connected with it in their proper and natural meaning. When I say, "Wallace was a thunderbolt of war," "in peace Fingal was the gale of spring," the thunderbolt of war, and the gale of spring, are sufficiently interpreted by the mention of Wallace and Fingal. But an allegory may be allowed to stand more unconnected with the literal meaning; the interpretation is not so directly pointed out, but is left to our own discovery.

Allegories were a favourite method of delivering instruction in ancient times; for what we call fables or parables are no other than allegories; and those fables are to be found among the earliest productions of literature. They represent the dispositions of men by words and actions attributed to beasts and inanimate objects; and what we call the moral, is the simple meaning of the allegory. An enigma or riddle is also a figure of this kind: one thing is imaged by another, but purposely rendered obscure by being involved in a complication of circumstances. Where a riddle is not intended, it is always a fault in an allegory to be too dark. The meaning should be easily seen through the figure by which it is shadowed. The proper mixture of light and shade in such compositions, the exact adjustment of all the figurative circumstances with the literal sense, so as neither to lay the meaning too open, nor to cover it too closely, has ever been found a subject of great nicety; and



in allegorical compositions of any length, few writers have succeeded.

An allegory is in every respect similar to a hieroglyphical painting, excepting only that words are used instead of colours. Their effects are precisely the same. A hieroglyphic raises two images in the mind; one seen, which represents one not seen. The same is the case with an allegory; the representative subject is described; and the resemblance leads us to apply the description to the subject represented.

Nothing affords greater pleasure than this figure, when the representative subject bears a strong analogy, in all its circumstances, to that which is represented; but the choice is seldom so fortunate, the analogy being generally so faint and obscure as to puzzle instead of pleasing. An allegory is still more difficult in painting than in writing: the former can shew no resemblance but what appears to the eye; whereas the latter has many other resources.

For the further illustration of the nature of allegory, I shall subjoin a few miscellaneous examples.\*

My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that he should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the

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\* Various remarks on allegorical composition may be found in Mr. Warton's *Observations on Spenser*, 2 vols. 8vo.



hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.—*Isaiah*.

Wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,  
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.  
What though the mast be now blown overboard,  
The cable broke, the holding anchor lost,  
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood?  
Yet lives our pilot still. Is't meet that he  
Should leave the helm, and, like a fearful lad,  
With tearful eyes add water to the sea,  
And give more strength to that which hath too much;  
While in his moan the ship splits on the rock,  
Which industry and courage might have sav'd!—*Shakspeare*.

Ha! thou hast rous'd  
The lion in his den; he stalks abroad,  
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.—*Southerne*.

Did I but purpose to embark with thee  
On the smooth surface of a summer's sea,  
While gentle zephyrs play with prosperous gales,  
And Fortune's favour fills the swelling sails;  
But would forsake the ship and make the shore,  
When the winds whistle and the tempests roar!—*Prior*.

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## CHAP. XVIII.

### OF THE CONCISE AND THE DIFFUSE STYLE.

ARISTOTLE has long ago delivered a very decided opinion as to the inutility of entering into any minute disquisition respecting the different species of style;

and, according to this high authority, to say that style ought to be sweet or magnificent, is not more to the purpose than to say that it ought to be temperate or liberal, or to display any other of the moral virtues.\* Nor has the importance of such discussions been more highly estimated by another learned writer, who belongs to a very recent era. "When," says Mr. Knight, "we find every florid and affected rhetorician, who has successively contributed to the corruption of Greek, Latin, and English eloquence, applauding, in quaint phraseology and epigrammatic point, the simple purity of Xenophon, Cæsar, and Swift, and condemning in others the very style which he employs, we can scarcely believe that he knew, at the time of writing, how widely the taste which he had acquired by habit, differed from the judgment which he exercised under the influence of authority."† These strictures are by no means encouraging: but we must nevertheless make an attempt to extract some degree of practical utility from an investigation of the different characters of style; and to fail in such an attempt, can, after these suggestions, occasion no surprize or disappointment.

It has already been hinted that, as words are copies of our ideas, there must always be a very intimate connexion between the manner in which every writer employs words, and his manner of thinking; and that,

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\* Τὸ δὲ προσδιαρεῖσθαι τὴν λέξιν, ὅτι ἡδέϊαν δεῖ καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῆ, περιέρχον· τί γὰρ μᾶλλον ἢ σώφρονα καὶ εὐθυμένιον, καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλη ἡθους ἀρετή; (Aristoteles de Rhetorica, lib. iii. cap. xii. p. 237. edit. Oxon. 1820, 8vo.)

† Knight's Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, p. 5.

by the peculiarity of his thought and expression, there is a certain character imprinted on his style, which may be denominated his manner. The terms which we use in order to express the general manner of different authors, bear some reference to their mode of expression. The distinctions of nervous and feeble, simple and affected, arise from the whole tenor of a writer's language, and comprehend the effect produced by all those parts of style which we have already considered; the choice which he makes of single words, his arrangement of these in sentences; the degree of his precision; and his embellishments, by means of musical cadence, or the various figures of speech.

That different subjects require to be treated with some difference of style, is a position too evident to stand in need of illustration. Philosophy demands one kind of style, oratory another; and different parts of the same composition require a variation in the style and manner. But amidst this variety, we still expect to find, in the writings of the same individual, some degree of uniformity, or consistency with himself; we expect to find impressed on all his works some predominant character of style, which shall be suited to his particular genius and turn of mind. Wherever there is real and native genius, it gives a determination to one kind of style rather than another. Where nothing of this description appears, where there is no marked or peculiar character in the compositions of an author, we are apt to infer that he writes from imitation; and not from the impulse of original genius.

One of the most obvious distinctions of style arises from the conciseness or the diffuseness with which an



author expresses his sentiments. A concise writer compresses his thoughts into the fewest possible words; he employs none but such as are most significant; he lops off every vague and redundant expression. Ornament he does not reject; he may be lively and figurative, but his ornaments are introduced in order to add force to his diction. He never repeats the same thought. His sentences are arranged with compactness and strength, rather than with grace and harmony. The utmost precision is studied in them; and they are commonly designed to suggest more to the reader's imagination than they directly express. On the other hand, a diffuse writer places his ideas in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every possible assistance for understanding them completely; he is not solicitous to express them at once in their full extent, because he generally repeats the impression; and what he wants in strength, he purposes to supply by copiousness. Writers of this character commonly love magnificence and amplification: their periods naturally extend to some length; and having room for ornament, they admit it freely.

Each of these manners has its peculiar advantages, and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of conciseness degenerates into abruptness and obscurity, and is apt to introduce a style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme of diffuseness becomes weak and languid, and fatigues the reader. To one or other of these two manners, a writer may however lean according as his genius prompts him; and, under the general character of a concise or of a diffuse style, may possess much beauty in his diction.



In judging when it is proper to incline to the concise, when to the diffuse manner, we must be directed by the nature of the composition. Discourses which are to be spoken, require a more copious style than books which are to be read. When the whole meaning must be caught from the mouth of the speaker, without the advantage which books afford of pausing at pleasure, and reviewing what appears obscure, great conciseness is always to be avoided. We should never presume too much on the quickness of our hearers' apprehension; but our style ought to be such, that any person of common capacity may without effort comprehend our meaning. A flowing copious style is therefore required in all public speakers; but they ought at the same time to guard against such a degree of diffusion as may render them languid and tiresome.

In written compositions, a certain degree of conciseness possesses great advantages. It appears lively, keeps up the attention, makes a stronger impression, and gratifies the mind by supplying more exercise to the reader's faculties.—A concise comprehensive style is a great ornament in narration; and a superfluity of unnecessary words altogether improper. A judicious selection of striking circumstances, clothed in nervous and concise language, produces a delightful effect. In addresses to the passions, the concise manner ought to be adopted, in preference to the diffuse. When we become prolix, we are always in hazard of cooling the reader; and when the imagination and heart are properly engaged, they spontaneously supply many particulars to greater advantage than an author can display them. The case is dif-

ferent, when we address ourselves to the understanding; as in all matters of reasoning, explication, and instruction. There we naturally prefer a more free and diffuse manner. When you would captivate the fancy, or engage the heart, be concise; when you would inform the understanding, be more copious and diffuse. The understanding moves more slowly, and requires to be assisted in its operations.

A diffusive style generally abounds in long, and a concise style often in short periods. It is not however to be inferred that long or short sentences are fully characteristic of the one or the other. An author may always employ short periods, and yet be very diffuse: a scanty portion of sentiment may spread through a great number of those periods. Some authors, by the shortness and quaintness of their sentences, may at first view appear very concise, without being so in reality: they transfuse the same thought into many different forms, and make it pass for a new one, only by giving a new turn to the expression. Thus, most of the French writers compose in short sentences, though their style in general is far from being concise. They commonly break down into two or three periods a portion of thought which a British author would crowd into one. In like manner, an author may employ long periods, and yet be concise: his periods may be long, without being overloaded with any redundancy of expression.

The direct tendency of short sentences is to render style brisk and lively, but not always concise. They keep the mind awake by means of quick successive impulses, and give to composition more of a spirited

character. Long periods are grave and stately; but, like all grave things, they are apt to become dull.

The following quotation may serve as an instance of the copious and diffuse style.

I can easily admire poetry, and yet without adoring it; I can allow it to arise from the greatest excellency of natural temper, or the greatest race of native genius, without exceeding the reach of what is human, or giving it any approaches of divinity, which is, I doubt, debased or dishonoured by ascribing it to any thing that is in the compass of our action, or even comprehension, unless it be raised by an immediate influence from itself. I cannot allow poetry to be more divine in its effects than in its causes, nor any operation produced by it to be more than purely natural, or to deserve any other sort of wonder than those of music, or of natural magic, however any of them have appeared to minds little versed in the speculations of nature, or occult qualities, and the force of numbers or of sounds. Whoever talks of drawing down the moon from heaven by force of verses or of charms, either believes not himself, or too easily believes what others told him, or perhaps follows an opinion begun by the practice of some poet, upon the facility of some people, who, knowing the time when an eclipse would happen, told them he would by his charms call down the moon at such an hour, and was by them thought to have performed it.—When I read that charming description in Virgil's eighth Eclogue of all sorts of charms and fascinations by verses, by images, by knots, by numbers, by fire, by herbs, employed upon occasion of a violent passion, from a jealous or disappointed love; I have recourse to the strong impressions of fables and of poetry, to the easy mistakes of popular opinions, to the force of imagination, to the secret virtues of several herbs, and to the powers of sounds: and I am sorry the natural history, or account of fascination, has not employed the pen of some persons of such excellent wit, and deep thought and learning, as Casaubon, who writ that curious and useful *Treatise of Enthusiasm*, and by it discovered the hidden or mistaken sources of that delusion, so frequent in all regions and religions of the world, and which had so fatally spread over our country in that age in which this treatise was so seasonably published. 'Tis much to be lamented that he lived not to complete that work in the second part he promised; or that his friends ne-



glected the publishing it, if it were left in papers, though loose and unfinished. I think a clear account of enthusiasm and fascination, from their natural causes, would very much deserve from mankind in general, as well as from the commonwealth of learning; might perhaps prevent so many public disorders, and save the lives of so many innocent, deluded, or deluding people, who suffer so frequently upon account of witches and wizards. I have seen many miserable examples of this kind in my youth at home; and though the humour or fashion be a good deal worn out of the world within thirty or forty years past, yet it still remains in several remote parts of Germany, Sweden, and some other countries.—*Temple on Poetry*, p. 234.

Of the concise style, I shall likewise subjoin an example.

A man, while awake, is conscious of a continued train of perceptions and ideas passing in his mind. It requires no activity on his part to carry on the train; nor can he at will add to the train any idea that has no connexion with it. At the same time we learn from daily experience, that the train of our thoughts is not regulated by chance; and if it depend not upon will, nor upon chance, by what law is it governed? The question is of importance in the science of human nature; and I promise beforehand, that it will be found of great importance in the fine arts.—It appears that the relations by which things are linked together, have a great influence in directing the train of thought. Taking a view of external objects, we see that their inherent properties are not more remarkable than their various relations which connect them together: one thing, perceived to be a cause, is connected with its several effects; some things are connected by contiguity in time, others by contiguity in space; some are connected by resemblance, some by contrast; some go before, some follow: not a single thing appears solitary and altogether devoid of connexion; the only difference is, that some are ultimately connected, some more slightly, some near, some at a distance.—Experience will satisfy us of what reason makes probable, that the train of our thoughts is in a great measure regulated by the foregoing connexions: an external object is no sooner presented to us in idea, than it suggests to the mind other objects with which it is connected; and in this manner is a train of thoughts composed. Such is the law of succession: whether an original law, or whether directed by some latent principle, is doubtful; and probably will for



ever remain so. This law, however, is not inviolable: it sometimes happens, that an idea arises in the mind without that connexion; as for example, after a profound sleep.—*Kames's Elements of Criticism.*

In this passage nothing is vague or redundant: every word and expression are appropriate.

Of all writers, ancient and modern, Aristotle, Tacitus, and Montesquieu, afford the most remarkable instances of conciseness in style. The language of Locke and Clarke, though far from being highly polished, is also concise, and, upon the whole, not badly adapted to the profound speculations of those authors. The style of Dr. Reid is entitled to no small praise on account of the same quality: he always expresses himself with clearness, and seldom makes use of a word that could be changed for another more suited to his purpose.

Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuseness, the works of Plato and Cicero exhibit, beyond doubt, the most illustrious instances that can be given. And, among our own countrymen, Temple, Addison, and Burke afford examples of the same species of excellence.

## CHAP. XIX.

### OF THE NERVOUS AND THE FEEBLE STYLE.

It is generally imagined that the terms nervous and feeble, when applied to style, are synonymous with concise and diffuse. This however is not the case.

It is indeed true that diffuse writers have, for the most part, some degree of feebleness, and that nervous writers will generally incline to conciseness of expression; but this is by no means a universal rule. There are instances of writers, who, in the midst of a full and copious style, have maintained a great degree of strength; and, on the other hand, an author may be parsimonious of his words, without attaining to any remarkable vigour of diction.

The foundations of a nervous or a weak style are laid in an author's manner of thinking. If his conceptions are strong, his expressions will generally be energetic. But if he have only an indistinct view of his subject, if his ideas be loose and wavering, if his genius be such, or, at the time of his writing, so carelessly exerted, that he has no firm hold of the conception which he would communicate to us, the marks of all this will plainly appear in his style. Several unmeaning words and loose epithets will be found; his expressions will be vague and general, his arrangement indistinct and feeble; we shall be able to conceive somewhat of his meaning, but our conceptions will be faint. Whereas a nervous writer, whether he employ an extended or a concise style, gives us always a strong impression of his meaning: his mind is full of his subject, and his words are all expressive; every phrase and every figure which he uses, tend to render more lively and complete the pleasure which he aims at communicating.

Every author, in every composition, ought to study to express himself with some degree of strength; for in proportion as he approaches the feeble he becomes a bad writer. In all kinds of writing, how-

ever, the same degree of strength is not required. But the more grave and weighty any composition is, the more should this quality predominate in the style: history, philosophy, and some species of oratory require it in an eminent degree; while in romances, epistles, and essays of a lighter cast, it is not so absolutely requisite.

Too great a study of strength, to the neglect of other desirable qualities of style, is apt to betray writers into a harshness of manner. Harshness arises from the use of unauthorized words, from forced inversions in the construction of sentences, and from the neglect of smoothness or harmony. This is reckoned the general fault of some of the earlier of our English classics; such as Hooker, Raleigh, Bacon, Milton, and other writers of the same period. The style of these writers is, for the most part, nervous and energetic in an eminent degree; but the language in their hands was very different from what it is at present. They were too fond of Latin idioms; and in the structure of their sentences, inversion is often carried to an unwarrantable length. Of that species of diction to which I here allude, it may be proper to produce one or two examples.

Though for no other cause, yet for this, that posterity may know we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men's information, extant thus much concerning the present state of the church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavour which would have upheld the same.—*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.*

We see scholars many, more than others ordinarily, subject to melancholy, because their retired courses of life, and privacy of study, is a great means to feed that humour where it is naturally



found; yet neither followeth it therefore, that all scholars live uncomfortable lives, because some do so, that are possessed and oppressed with that humour; nor may that rightly be ascribed to study and learning, which not it, but the constitution of some students, produceth.—*Gutaker's Joy of the Just.*

With regard to the transposition of words and members out of what we are apt to call their natural order, critics have entered into much discussion. It is agreed on all hands, that such transposition or inversion bestows upon a period a very sensible degree of force and elevation; and yet writers seem to be at a loss in what manner to account for this effect. Whether, upon the whole, we have gained or lost, by departing from this mode of arrangement, has by some been doubted. It however appears sufficiently evident that the genius of the English language does not naturally admit of much inversion; and that such instances of transposition as occur in the passages lately quoted, are altogether obsolete: no modern writer could adopt them without the censure of harshness and affectation.

Among those who first laid aside the frequent inversions which prevailed among writers of the former age, we may reckon Cowley and Clarendon. The writings of Temple also contributed much to advance the language to its present state; but to those of Dryden it is chiefly indebted for its smoothness and elegance. Dryden began to write about the time of the Restoration, and continued long in his literary career. He brought to the study of his native tongue, a vigorous mind fraught with various knowledge. There is a richness in his diction, a copiousness, ease, and variety in his expression, which



have never been surpassed by any of those who have succeeded him. His clauses are never balanced, nor his periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold, or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous: what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though since the publication of his works more than a century has elapsed, yet they have nothing uncouth or obsolete.\*

Some are of opinion, that it is elegance rather than strength, which forms the chief characteristic of modern English authors. They maintain that, since the close of the seventeenth century, few specimens have been exhibited of energetic composition, and that purity and elegance have been studied, to the neglect of strength and vigour. This charge seems to be unsupported by facts. What writer expresses himself with greater energy than Johnson; or who ever discovered any want of this quality in the compositions of Hawkesworth, Robertson, and Stuart? Vigour is sometimes confounded with harshness; it is supposed that a writer cannot be energetic, without being rugged. "They would not have it run without rubs, as if that stile were more strong and manly, that stroke the ear with a kind of unevenesse."<sup>†</sup> Those who complain that, with regard to energy of expression, no writer of the present age can be compared with Raleigh and Bacon, ought to

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\* Johnson's *Lives of English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 122.

† Jonson's *Discoveries*, p. 93.

impute this circumstance to another cause than the study of purity and elegance. If the foundations of a nervous or weak style be laid in the author's manner of thinking, the matter may readily be explained: Raleigh and Bacon possessed greater genius than those who are brought into competition with them.

I shall now endeavour to select some instances of the vigorous style; though the general character of a writer cannot be collected from detached passages.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited inquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination, nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade. His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves; his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured.—*Johnson's Life of Pope.*

From the writings of Johnson a more admirable specimen might be selected; but I have chosen this, on account of its reference to our present subject.

Christianity was more calculated, than the superstitions of paganism, to impress the imagination and the heart. The rite of baptism taught the follower of Odin to transfer his worship to Christ. To defend Christianity with his sword and his life, became a sacred vow, to which every knight was ambitious to submit. He considered him-

self as a saint, as well as a hero; and on the foundation of his piety, the successors of St. Peter were to precipitate the armies of Europe upon Asia, and to commence the crusades, those memorable monuments of superstition and heroism. The lady, not less than the knight, was to feel the influence of this religion. Society was to be disturbed with the sublime extravagance of fanatics, who were to court perfections out of the order of nature. Mortifications, austerities, and penances, were to be meritorious in proportion to their duration and cruelty. The powers and affections of the mind and the heart were to sicken and to languish in frivolous and fatiguing ceremonials. The eye of beauty was to sadden in monasteries and in solitude, or to light the unholy fires of a rampant priesthood. The deity was to be worshipped in abjectness and in terror, as if he contemned the works he had made, and took delight in human dejection and wretchedness.—*Stuart's View of Society.*

It is with justice that Mr. Hayley distinguishes Dr. Stuart as an author possessed of "all the energy of genius."\* His style, though certainly deficient in fluency and in variety, is bold and vigorous; and upon some occasions he even rises to uncommon eloquence. The English language can boast of few more striking works than his *View of Society in Europe*. The subject is interesting and important; and he has applied himself to the investigation of it with great assiduity and research.

Wherever they marched, their route was marked with blood. They ravaged or destroyed all around them. They made no distinction between what was sacred and what was profane. They respected no age, or sex, or rank. What escaped the fury of the first inundation, perished in those which followed it. The most fertile and populous provinces were converted into deserts, in which were scattered the ruins of villages and cities, that afforded shelter to a few miserable inhabitants whom chance had preserved, or the sword of the enemy, wearied with destroying, had spared. The conquerors who first settled in the countries, which they had wasted, were expelled

\* Hayley's *Essay on History*, p. 157. Lond. 1780, 4to.



or exterminated by new invaders, who, coming from regions farther removed from the civilized parts of the world, were still more fierce and rapacious. This brought new calamities upon mankind, which did not cease until the north, by pouring forth successive swarms, was drained of people, and could no longer furnish instruments of destruction. Famine and pestilence, which always march in the train of war when it ravages with such inconsiderate cruelty, raged in every part of Europe, and completed its sufferings.—*Robertson's View of Society.*

The style of Dr. Robertson is at once polished and energetic; and, upon the whole, it appears to me the best model of an historical style that belongs to the English language. The objections which have been urged against it by a late popular writer, it may here be proper to consider. "The historian of Charles the Fifth," says Dr. Knox, "possesses so many excellencies, that it is almost sacrilegious to detract from his merit. But no writer is perfect; and I doubt not, from the opinion I entertain of his taste and candour, that he will confess, when the ardour of composition is abated, that his style has deviated from the historical to the declamatory. He relates the councils as well as the wars of nations with all the vehemence of a Demosthenes, and the rapid eloquence of a Ciceronian Philippic. The style is glowing and animated in a high degree; but does nature dictate that a long and diffuse dissertation on such subjects as the feudal state, or on others equally dispassionate in themselves, should be treated in a style which would become an orator in the act of rousing his sluggish countrymen to repel an invader? I will not enter into an inquiry, whether such long dissertations legitimately belong to history or to another species of composi-



tion. I believe they might more properly be classed under the name of political dissertations. They find no place in the purer models of antiquity; and the reader has certainly a right to complain when they occupy a disproportionate part of a work, and appear in the place of facts, on which he might make his own reflections. But the fire and *vis vivida*, or the life and the spirit which is diffused over this respectable writer's page, induces us to forget awhile the rules prescribed by the frigidity of criticism. What though he seems to have made Demosthenes his model, instead of Livy or Herodotus, yet surely, what bears any resemblance to the spirit of that noble Athenian, cannot fail to delight and improve.\*

These observations seem to be dictated by the spirit of cold and systematic criticism. Why is the historian to be debarred from relating the councils of nations with a vehement and rapid eloquence? The councils of nations may be more interesting than their wars: it is upon their issue that war or peace depends; and they often tend to exhibit the characteristic features not only of distinguished personages, but of a whole people. The feudal state, with all its incidents and appendages, is not necessarily a dispassionate subject: it presents the human mind in a great variety of singular and interesting aspects, and affords an eloquent writer many opportunities of exerting his powers. Whether such dissertations find a place among the models of antiquity, is of little importance in the determination of the present question. That they have only been at-

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\* Knox's Essays, vol. i. p. 134. edit. Lond. 1823, 3 vols. 12mo.

tempted by the moderns, is a circumstance which tends to shew the progressive improvement of every thing connected with the intellectual faculties of man. It is absurd to propose the ancient historians as permanent models: in many respects they are greatly excelled by the moderns, who exhibit a more complete and masterly view of "the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world."\* That beautiful dissertation which appeared so long and diffuse to the ingenious writer, will by most readers be perused with a very lively interest. Enquiries into the nature and progress of society are certainly much more important than narrations of battles and sieges, negotiations and intrigues. The disquisitions of Ferguson, Robertson, and Stuart, may be classed with the most masterly productions in the English language. In Dr. Ferguson's work, even Mr. Gray acknowledged "uncommon strains of eloquence."†

The style of Mr. Gibbon has sometimes been preferred to that of Dr. Robertson; but this seems to be an honour to which it is scarcely entitled. It evinces less correctness, less compression, and less of a genuine classical taste; it abounds with affected circumlocutions, and with epithets which have the appearance of being introduced for the sake of the

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\* Johnson's *Rasselas*, chap. xxx.

† Gray's Works, vol. ii. p. 460.

sound, rather than of the sense. Yet, with all this want of chasteness, it displays so many of the flowers of an elegant fancy, that it is very far from being entitled to the contempt which it has sometimes experienced.\*

If it be necessary to produce an instance of the feeble style, the following may, I think, be selected with sufficient propriety. The author was professor of poetry in the university of Oxford, and was a writer of considerable reputation.

To read such vast numbers as he did, he latterly made use of a method as extraordinary as any thing I have hitherto mentioned of him. When a book first came into his hands, he would *look the title-page all over, then dip here and there* in the preface, dedication, and advertisements, if there were any; *and then cast his eyes on each of the divisions, the different sections, or chapters, and then he would be able for ever to know what that book contained;* for he remembered as steadily, as he conceived rapidly.—It was after he had *taken to this way of fore-shortening* his reading, if I may be allowed so odd an expression; *and I think I rather may*, because he conceived the matter almost as completely in this short way, as if he had read it at full length; that a priest, who had composed a panegyric on one of his favourite saints, brought it to Magliabechi as a present. He

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\* Dr. Knox has thus characterized the style of Gibbon's history: "The style displays not the honest warmth of a Robertson, but appears with an air of soft and subtle insinuation, better adapted to introduce a lurking poison. The words are well chosen; but the collocation of them is feeble and effeminate, though painfully elaborate and affected. There is scarcely a sentence throughout the work without an idle epithet, which, while it loads and wearies the ear, adds little to the meaning, and less to the force of the period. There is a disgusting affectation of fastidious delicacy. There is also a tedious sameness in the style, which renders the reading a toil, and which will gradually consign the work to its peaceful shelf, as soon as the fashionable world shall have found another idol." (Essays, vol. i. p. 135.)



had read it over the way above mentioned; only the title-page, and the heads of the chapters; and then thanked him very kindly for his excellent treatise. The author, in some pain, asked him, "Whether that was all he intended to read of his book?" Magliabechi coolly answered, "Yes; for I know very well every thing that is in it." My author for this anecdote endeavoured to account for it in the following manner: Magliabechi, says he, knew all that *the writers before* had said of this saint; he knew this particular father's turn and character; and from thence judged what he would chuse out of them, and what he would omit.—*Spence's Life of Magliabechi.*

This passage seems to exhibit almost every possible fault. The sentences are constructed in a very unskilful manner: the circumstances are often improperly placed, and the members loose and disjointed; nothing is expressed with energy; all is feeble and ungraceful. The commencement of the third sentence presents so violent a separation of correspondent words, that the sense is involved in a considerable degree of obscurity. Nor is the author's phraseology less exceptionable: it is altogether mean if not vulgar, as the expressions in *Italics* will sufficiently testify.

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## CHAP. XX.

### OF THE VEHEMENT STYLE.

THE vehement rises a degree above the nervous style. The former however always includes the latter; for in order to attain to any vehemence of diction, an author must necessarily be possessed of strength.



The vehement style is distinguished by a peculiar ardour of expression: it is the language of a man whose imagination and passions are strongly affected by the subject which he contemplates; and who is therefore negligent of inferior graces, but pours forth his eloquence with the fulness and rapidity of a torrent. It belongs to the higher species of oratory; and indeed is rather expected from a man who declaims in a popular assembly, than from one who writes in the retirement of his closet. Of this style, the most striking examples in our language have been exhibited by Bolingbroke and Burke.

Lord Bolingbroke was fitted by nature to be the demagogue of a popular assembly. The style which predominates in all his political writings, is that of a person declaiming with heat, rather than writing with deliberation. He abounds with rhetorical figures, and pours himself forth with great impetuosity. He is copious to a fault; places the same thought before us in many different views, but generally with vivacity or ardour. He is bold rather than correct: his eloquence is a torrent that flows strong, but often muddy. His merit as a writer would have been considerable, if his matter had equalled his style; but while we find much to commend in the latter, the former is entitled to a scanty measure of praise. In his reasonings, he is for the most part flimsy and false; in his political writings factious; and in what he calls his philosophical ones, irreligious and sophistical in the highest degree.\* The history of his life

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\* The earl of Chesterfield, having mentioned Lord Bolingbroke's Spirit of Patriotism, proceeds in the following manner: "I desire

and writings affords a very striking and a very edifying example of the inutility of the most brilliant talents, unaccompanied by moral worth.

Mr. Burke was a man of the most splendid talents, and those talents had been improved by due cultivation. His imagination was fervent and brilliant, but his judgment was less vigorous than his imagination. In modern, and indeed in ancient times, the copiousness and force of his eloquence have not often been paralleled: it rolls along like a rapid and impetuous torrent, and bears down every object that rises in opposition. His illustrations are variegated and striking; he is even profuse of poetical conceptions and poetical imagery: his metaphors however are not unfrequently coarse, and his language is deficient in purity and selection. When he has begun to descant on a subject which interests his morbid feelings, he knows not when to pass to another. Upon the whole, it may perhaps be affirmed with safety, that his va-

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that you will read it over and over again, with particular attention to the style, and to all those beauties of oratory with which it is adorned. Till I read that book, I confess I did not know all the extent and powers of the English language. Lord Bolingbroke has both a tongue and a pen to persuade; his manner of speaking in private conversation, is full as elegant as his writings; whatever subject he either speaks or writes upon, he adorns with the most splendid eloquence; not a studied or laboured eloquence, but such a flowing happiness of diction, which (from care perhaps at first) is become so habitual to him, that even his most familiar conversations, if taken down in writing, would bear the press, without the least correction either as to method or style. If his conduct, in the former part of his life, had been equal to all his natural and acquired talents, he would most justly have merited the epithet of all-accomplished." (Letters to his Son, vol. i. p. 515. Lond. 1774, 2 vols. 4to.)

rious productions were more calculated to excite the astonishment or indignation of his contemporaries, than to secure the applause or imitation of posterity.\*

In treating of the vehement style, I have not, as upon former occasions, attempted to select examples. The subject cannot in the present instance be elucidated in this manner: vehemence of style can only be perceived and relished by attending to a long series of reasonings and illustrations.

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## CHAP. XXI.

### OF THE PLAIN STYLE.

A PLAIN style rejects all ambitious ornaments. The writer who adopts this manner, may perhaps endeavour to display his meaning with perspicuity and precision; qualities of style which, it must be confessed, are of the highest order. His composition may also be possessed of force and vivacity; but he will shew an indifference for what is merely ornamental. He does not strive to captivate the fancy or the ear by employing rhetorical figures, or musical arrangement: yet it is not necessary that he disgust his reader by a dryness or harshness of manner. A plain style is consistent with smoothness of

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\* *Δισχρόν γ' ὅταν τις, εὐεπὴς γλῶσση φνεῖς,  
Γλῶσση ματαίους ἐξακοντίσῃ λόγους.*

*Menandri Fragmenta, p. 225. edit. Meineke.*



arrangement, and a temperate use of metaphor; though neither of these is absolutely requisite.

In discussions of a philosophical nature, the plain style ought to predominate; and accordingly many of the English philosophers have employed it with propriety. Even in works which admit or require much ornament, there are parts where the plain manner should be adopted. But it must be remembered, that when this is the character which a writer affects throughout his whole composition, great weight of matter, and great force of sentiment, are required to secure the reader's attention. Unless he happen to treat of mathematical subjects, an author ought always to beware of falling into a dryness of manner. This excludes ornaments of every description. Content with being understood, it has not the least aim to please either the fancy or the ear. Aristotle furnishes the most complete example of a dry style: never perhaps was there an author who adhered so rigidly to the strictness of a didactic manner throughout all his writings, and conveyed so much instruction without the least approach to ornament. With the most profound genius, and the most extensive views, he writes like a pure intelligence, who addresses himself solely to the understanding, without making any use of the channel of the imagination. But this is a manner which deserves not to be imitated: for although the value of the matter may compensate for the dryness or harshness of the style, yet is that dryness a considerable defect; it fatigues the attention, and conveys our sentiments with disadvantage to the reader or hearer. It would however appear that Aristotle



wrote in this manner from choice rather than necessity: had he preferred a more ornamental style, he could undoubtedly have attained it; and it is the opinion of some learned men, that, if we may judge from the specimen which still remains, he was fitted by nature to excel in the higher species of poetry: Scaliger regards his Hymn to Virtue\* as not inferior to the compositions of Pindar.†

Dr. Swift, the renowned dean of St. Patrick's, may be placed at the head of those who have employed the plain style. Few English writers have discovered greater talents. He always shews himself completely master of the subject of which he treats. Few were better acquainted with the extent, the purity, the precision of the English language; and therefore, to those who are ambitious of attaining a pure and sober style, he is one of the most useful models. But we must not look for much ornament or grace in his language. His haughty and morose genius made him despise any embellishment of that kind as beneath his dignity. He delivers his sentiments in a plain, positive manner, like one who is sure he is always right, and is very indifferent whether his reader be pleased or not. His

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\* This poem is preserved by Diogenes Laertius, lib. v. p. 272. edit. Meibomii, Athenaeus, lib. xv. cap. xvi. and by Stobaeus, Florilegium, vol. i. p. 4. edit. Gaisford. It may likewise be found in many recent publications, and, among others, in the following: Brunck, *Analecta veterum Poetarum Graecorum*, tom. i. p. 177. Ilgen, *Carmina Convivialia Graecorum*, p. 137. Jenæ, 1798, 8vo. Hurd's *Horace*, vol. i. p. 177.

† "Ut etiam perpendas quantus vir ille fuerit in poesi; neque ipso Pindaro minor." (*Scaligeri Poetice*, lib. i. cap. xlv, p. 48. *Apud Antonium Vincentium*, 1561, fol.)

sentences are often negligently arranged: the sense is sufficiently obvious, but little regard is paid to compactness or elegance. If a metaphor, or any other figure, chanced to render his satire more poignant, he would perhaps condescend to adopt it, when it presented itself; but if it tended only to embellish or illustrate, he would rather throw it aside. Hence in his serious writings, his style often borders upon the dry and unpleasing. But in his humorous pieces, the plainness of his manner displays his wit to the greatest advantage.

Dr. Johnson has commented on the style and manner of Swift with his usual powers of discrimination. "In his works he has given very different specimens both of sentiments and expression. His *Tale of a Tub* has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of any thing else which he has written.

"In his other works is found an equable tenour of easy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice. He studied purity; and though perhaps all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sentences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be easy to find any

embarrassment in the complication of his clauses, any inconsequence in his connections, or abruptness in his transitions.

“His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilised by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprise nor admiration; he always understands himself, and his readers always understand him; the peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge; it will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstruction.

“This easy and safe conveyance of meaning it was Swift’s desire to attain, and for having attained it he deserves praise, though perhaps not the highest praise. For purposes merely didactick, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is the best mode; but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade.”\*

It will now be proper to select a passage characteristic of that species of style of which we have been treating; and with this view we shall have recourse to the writings of Swift.

I suppose it will be granted that hardly one in an hundred among

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\* Johnson’s *Lives of English Poets*, vol. iii. p. 412. edit. Lond. 1791, 4 vols. 8vo.

our people of quality, or gentry, appears to act by any principle of religion ; that great numbers of them do entirely discard it, and are ready to own their disbelief of all revelation in ordinary discourse. Nor is the case much better among the vulgar, especially in great towns ; where the profaneness and ignorance of handicraftsmen, small traders, servants, and the like, are to a degree very hard to be imagined greater. Then it is observed abroad, that no race of mortals hath so little sense of religion as the English soldiers : to confirm which, I have been often told by great officers in the army, that in the whole compass of their acquaintance, they could not recollect three of their profession, who seemed to regard or believe one syllable of the gospel : and the same, at least, may be affirmed of the fleet. The consequences of all which, upon the actions of men, are equally manifest. They never go about, as in former times, to hide or palliate their vices ; but expose them freely to view, like any other common occurrences of life, without the least reproach from the world or themselves. For instance, any man will tell you, he intends to be drunk this evening, or was so last night, with as little ceremony or scruple as he would tell you the time of the day. He will let you know that he is going to a wench, with as much indifference as he would a piece of public news. He will swear, curse, or blaspheme, without the least passion or provocation. And although all regard for reputation be not quite laid aside in the other sex, it is however at so low an ebb, that very few among them seem to think virtue and conduct of any necessity for preserving it. If this be not so, how comes it to pass that women of tainted reputations find the same countenance and reception in all public places, with those of the nicest virtue, who pay and receive visits from them, without any manner of scruple ? Which proceeding, as it is not very old among us, so I take it to be of most pernicious consequence. It looks like a sort of compounding between virtue and vice ; as if a woman were allowed to be vicious, provided she be not profligate ; as if there was a certain point where gallantry ends, and infamy begins ; or that an hundred criminal amours were not as pardonable as half a score.—*Swift on the Advancement of Religion.*



## CHAP. XXII.

## OF THE NEAT STYLE.

NEATNESS of style implies a certain degree of ornament. Its ornaments however are not of the most showy or brilliant kind, but such as are easily attained. A writer who employs this kind of style, considers the beauties of language as an object worthy of attention. He is careful in the choice of his words, and endeavours to arrange them with propriety and elegance; but he seldom attempts any bold flight of eloquence. His sentences are free from the incumbrance of superfluous words; they are of a moderate length, and rather inclining to brevity than to a swelling structure; they generally close with propriety, and are unincumbered with *long tails*. His cadence is varied, but not of the studied musical kind. Such figures as he employs, are short and correct, rather than bold and glowing.

This style may perhaps be adopted by an author of superior genius; but it is not unattainable by one of no uncommon capacity. Any writer of ordinary attainments may acquire it, by carefully attending to the rules of rhetoric, and to the practice of writers of established reputation. It is a mode of writing that never becomes disagreeable. It imprints a character of moderate elevation on our composition, and displays a decent degree of ornament, which is not incompatible with any subject whatever. A familiar letter, or a law paper, may be written with neatness;

and a sermon, or philosophical treatise, in a neat style, will be read with pleasure.

The writings of Middleton, Blackstone, and Smith, appear to me to exhibit models of this species of style. From the last of these authors I shall endeavour to select an apposite passage.

We sympathize even with the dead, and overlooking what is of real importance in their situation, that awful futurity which awaits them, we are chiefly affected by those circumstances which strike our senses, but can have no influence upon their happiness. It is miserable, we think, to be deprived of the light of the sun; to be shut out from life and conversation; to be laid in the cold grave a prey to corruption and the reptiles of the earth; to be no more thought of in this world, but to be obliterated in a little time from the affections and almost from the memory of their dearest friends and relations. Surely, we imagine, we can never feel too much for those who have suffered so dreadful a calamity. The tribute of our fellow-feelings seems doubly due to them now when they are in danger of being forgot by every body; and, by the vain honours which we pay to their memory, we endeavour, for our own misery, artificially to keep alive our melancholy remembrance of their misfortune. That our sympathy can afford them no consolation, seems to be an addition to their calamity; and to think that all we can do is unavailing, and that, what alleviates all other distress, the regret, the love, and the lamentations of their friends, can yield no comfort to them, serves only to exasperate our sense of their misery. The happiness of the dead, however, most assuredly is affected by none of these circumstances; nor is it the thought of these things which can ever disturb the profound security of their repose. The idea of that dreary and endless melancholy which the fancy naturally ascribes to their condition, arises altogether from our joining to the change which has been produced upon them, our own consciousness of that change, from our putting ourselves in their situation, and from our lodging, if I may be allowed to say so, our own living souls in their inanimated bodies, and thence conceiving what would be our emotions in this case. It is from this very illusion of the imagination, that the foresight of our own dissolution is so terrible to us,

and that the idea of those circumstances, which undoubtedly can give us no pain when we are dead, makes us miserable while we are alive.  
—*Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.*

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## CHAP. XXIII.

### OF THE GRACEFUL STYLE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the powerful effect which graceful composition produces upon the mind, it is difficult to reduce it to a definition. Where language does not supply us with proper words to express the ideas of the mind, we can only convey our sentiments in figurative terms; a defect which necessarily introduces some obscurity.

Grace in writing may be compared to that easy air which so remarkably distinguishes persons of a genteel and liberal cast.\* It consists not only in the particular beauty of single parts, but in the general symmetry and construction of the whole. An author may be just in his sentiments, lively in his figures, and clear in his expression, yet at the same time may

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\* "Do not take me for a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient of writing—but I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve from putrefaction; and is distinct even from style, which regards *expression*; grace I think belongs to *manner*. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors, not in your favour, obtained part of their renown." (Walpoliana, vol. i. p. 48.) This passage I quote from a letter which the earl of Orford appears to have addressed to Mr. Pinkerton, one of the most ungraceful of all writers.

be wholly a stranger to graceful composition. The several members of a discourse must be so agreeably united as mutually to reflect beauty upon each other: their arrangement must be so happily disposed as not to admit of the least interposition without manifest prejudice to the entire piece. The thoughts, the metaphors, the allusions, and the diction, should appear easy and natural, and seem to arise like so many spontaneous productions, rather than as the effects of labour or art. Whatever therefore is forced or affected in the sentiments, whatever pompous or pedantic in the expression, is the very reverse of grace. Her mien is neither that of a prude, nor that of a coquette; she is regular without being formal, and sprightly without being fantastical. Grace is to good writing what a proper light is to a fine picture; it not only shews all the figures in their several proportions and relations, but shews them in the most advantageous manner. As gentility appears in the most minute actions, and improves the most inconsiderable gesture, so grace is discovered in the placing even of a single word, or in the turn of a mere expletive. Nor is this inexpressible quality confined to one species of composition; it extends from the humble pastoral to the lofty epic, from the slightest letter to the most solemn discourse.

It is supposed that Sir William Temple was the first writer who introduced a graceful manner into English prose;\* but I am rather inclined to think

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\* Melmoth's Letters of Sir Thomas Fitzosborne, p. 137. 7th edit. Lond. 1769, 8vo.



that this honour is due to Cowley. The general merit of this author's essays has been acknowledged by Johnson\* and Goldsmith;† but they have never been referred to as instances of graceful composition. They however seem entitled to this mark of distinction. His sentiments are natural, and his diction simple and unaffected: nothing appears far-fetched, or artificially constructed; and our ears are seldom or never assailed with pompous and pedantic expressions.

But wherever we may look for the origin of this quality, it is certainly to be found in its highest perfection in the compositions of Mr. Addison, an author whose writings will be distinguished as long as politeness and good sense find any admirers.‡ That becoming air which Cicero esteems the criterion of fine writing, and which every reader, he says, imagines so easy to be imitated, yet will find so difficult to attain, is the prevailing characteristic of all this

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\* Johnson's *Lives of English Poets*, vol. i. p. 103.

† Goldsmith's *Essays and Criticisms*, vol. iii. p. 147.

‡ Dr. Young speaks of him in the following terms. "Addison wrote little in verse, much in sweet, elegant, Virgilian prose; so let me call it, since Longinus calls Herodotus, most Homeric, and Thucydides is said to have formed his style on Pindar. Addison's compositions are built with the finest materials in the taste of the ancients, and (to speak his own language) on truly classic ground; and though they are the delight of the present age, yet am I persuaded that they will receive more justice from posterity. I never read him but I am struck with such a disheartening idea of perfection, that I drop my pen; and indeed far superior writers should forget his compositions if they would be greatly pleased with their own." (*Conjectures on Original Composition: Works in Prose*, p. 321. Lond. 1765, 12mo.)

excellent author's performances. We may justly apply to him what Plato, in his allegorical language, says of Aristophanes: the Graces, having searched all the world round for a temple in which they might for ever dwell, settled at last in the breast of Addison.\*

His style is thus characterized by Dr. Johnson. "His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

"It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction: he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism.† What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetick; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied

\* Brunck, *Analecta veterum Poetarum Graecorum*, tom. i. p. 171.

Αἱ Χάριτες τέμενός τι λαβεῖν, ὅπερ οὐχὶ πεσέεται,  
Ζητοῦσαι, ψυχὴν εὖρον Ἀριστοφάνους.

† This appears to be a truism. The remark, when duly analyzed, seems to comprehend the following averment:—if his language had been less idiomatical, it would have been less idiomatical.

amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy.”\*

Dryden, Pope, and Atterbury, are generally reckoned among the number of graceful writers; and to these we may safely add the names of Berkeley and Hume. In reference to the style of Bishop Berkeley, Sir James Mackintosh has made the following remarks: “Of the exquisite grace and beauty of his diction, no man accustomed to English composition can need to be informed. His works are, beyond dispute, the finest models of philosophical style since Cicero. Perhaps they surpass those of the orator, in the wonderful art by which the fullest light is thrown on the most minute and evanescent parts of the most subtle of human conceptions. Perhaps he also surpassed Cicero in the charm of simplicity; a quality eminently found in Irish writers before the end of the eighteenth century; conspicuous in the masculine severity of Swift, in the Platonic fancy of Berkeley, in the native tenderness and elegance of Goldsmith, and not withholding its attractions from Hutcheson and Leland, writers of classical taste, though of inferior powers.”† As a polite writer, Mr. Hume appears to great advantage in some of his essays;‡ and his History of England,

\* Johnson's *Lives of English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 429.

† Mackintosh's *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, p. 351.

‡ Dr. Aikin, speaking of the style of philosophical writings, makes the following observations. “Great precision in the use of words, clear arrangement of all the members of a sentence, closeness of method, strength and conciseness of expression, without harshness or obscurity, are essential to perfection in this department of writ-



whatever may be thought of its matter or spirit, is written with consummate art. His style is often possessed of uncommon grace and suavity. It must however be acknowledged, that he sometimes adopts French idioms; a fault which was undoubtedly owing to his long residence on the continent.

The prose compositions of Dr. Beattie are often distinguished by a degree of chaste ornament, not unworthy of the author of the *Minstrel*; they are indeed distinguished by uncommon grace and elegance. His epistolary correspondence, interspersed in the late Sir William Forbes's *Account of his Life and Writings*, evinces a peculiar felicity of style. Mr. Cowper, in one of his letters, mentions him in terms of the warmest commendation. "I thanked you in my last for Johnson, I now thank you with more emphasis for Beattie, the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with; the only author I have seen whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject, and the leanest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease too, that his own character appears in every page, and, which is very rare, we see not only the writer, but the man; and that man so gentle, so well tempered, so happy in his religion,

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ing; and if somewhat of the grace and amenity of language be added, which is not incompatible with the other requisites, the effect of conviction may be promoted, by leading on the reader pleasantly through a topic perhaps naturally dry and unalluring. I conceive Cicero and Hume to be examples of this union of every useful and agreeable quality in discussions purely philosophical." (*Letters to his Son*, vol. ii. p. 59.)



and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him if one has any sense of what is lovely.\*

Of a light and graceful style we discover many examples in the writings of the late earl of Orford, better known by the name of Horace Walpole. It is very rare to find so much talent united to so much frivolity. His epistolary composition exhibits a peculiar air of ease and pleasantry; and if we could divest ourselves of the idea that we are reading the effusions of a heartless coxcomb, his letters might be read with a high degree of pleasure.

In the writings of Mr. Harris, I own myself unable to perceive those Platonic graces for which they have been so highly extolled by Dr. Knox.† His style seems for the most part to be quite the reverse of graceful. His combination of words is often harsh and disagreeable; and on many occasions, he employs Greek rather than English idioms.

In exhibiting an example of the graceful style, I shall have recourse to the works of Mr. Melmoth.

I consider a generous mind as the noblest work of the creation, and am persuaded, wherever it resides, no real merit can be wanting. It is perhaps the most singular of all the moral endowments; I am sure at least, it is often imputed where it cannot justly be claimed. The meanest self-love, under some refined disguise, frequently passes upon common observers for this god-like principle; and I have known many a popular action attributed to this motive, when it flowed from no higher a source than the suggestions of concealed vanity. Good-nature, as it hath many features in common with this virtue, is usually mistaken for it: the former however is but the effect, possibly of a happy disposition of the animal structure, or, as Dryden somewhere calls it, of a certain "milkiness of

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\* Hayley's Life of Cowper, vol. ii. p. 192.

† Knox's Essays, vol. iii. p. 40.

blood ;” whereas the latter is seated in the mind, and can never subsist where good sense and enlarged sentiments have no existence. It is entirely founded indeed upon justness of thought, which perhaps is the reason this virtue is so little the characteristic of mankind in general. A man whose mind is warped by the selfish passions, or contracted by the narrow prejudices of sects or parties, if he does not want honesty, must undoubtedly want understanding. The same clouds that darken his intellectual views, obstruct his moral ones ; and his generosity is extremely circumscribed, because his reason is exceedingly limited.—True generosity rises above the ordinary rules of social conduct, and flows with much too full a stream to be comprehended within the precise marks of former precepts. It is a vigorous principle in the soul, which opens and expands all her virtues far beyond those which are only the forced and unnatural productions of a timid obedience. The man who is influenced singly by motives of the latter kind, aims no higher than at certain authoritative standards ; without even attempting to reach those glorious elevations, which constitute the only true heroism of the social character. Religion, without this sovereign principle, degenerates into a slavish fear, and wisdom into a specious cunning ; learning is but the avarice of the mind, and wit its more pleasing kind of madness. In a word, generosity sanctifies every passion, and adds grace to every acquisition of the soul ; and if it does not necessarily include, at least it reflects a lustre upon the whole circle of moral and intellectual qualities.—*Melmoth's Letters of Fitzosborne.*

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## CHAP. XXIV.

### OF THE FLORID STYLE.

QUINCTILIAN regards it as a favourable presage in juvenile writers, that their compositions display a redundancy of fancy.\* We must however beware of

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\* “ Audeat hæc ætas plura, et inveniatur, et inventis gaudeat, sint Moet illa non satis interim sicca et severa. Facile remedium est

mistaking pomp of expression for luxuriance of imagination. The former is of easy access, but the latter is more rarely to be attained. It is in the power of every one to load his style with high-sounding words and phrases; but to embellish a discourse with the glowing colours of fancy, requires the aid of inventive genius.

A certain degree of chaste ornament can never be unseasonable; though gaudy and meretricious ornaments are always disgusting. The over florid style therefore cannot be agreeable to a reader of taste. Although it may be allowed to youth in their first essays, it must not receive the same indulgence when employed by writers of maturer years. We may reasonably expect, that judgment, as it ripens, should chasten imagination, and reject as juvenile all such ornaments as are redundant or unsuitable. Nothing can be more contemptible than that tinsel splendour of language which some writers perpetually affect. It were well if this could be ascribed to the overflowing of a rich imagination; for, in that case, we should at least find something to amuse our fancy, if we found nothing to instruct our understanding. But it is luxuriance of words, not of thought, that is ex-

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ubertatis; sterilia nullo labore vincuntur. Illa mihi in pueris natura minimum spei dederit, in qua ingenium judicio præsumitur. Materiam esse primum volo vel abundantiorē, atque ultra quam oporteat fusam. Multum inde decoquent anni, multum ratio limabit, aliquid velut usu ipso deteretur, sit modò unde excidi possit, et quod exsculpi: erit autem, si non ab initio tenuem nimium laminam duxerimus, et quam cœlatura altior rumpat. Quod me de his ætatibus sentire minus mirabitur, qui apud Ciceronem legerit, *Volo enim se efferat in adolescente fecunditas.*" (Quintilian. de Institut. Orator. lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 273. edit. Spalding.)

hibited by these frothy writers: we see a laboured attempt to rise to a splendour of composition, of which they have formed some kind of loose idea; but not possessing sufficient strength of genius to attain the desired object, they endeavour to supply the defect by the use of poetical words, cold exclamations, and common-place figures. While they are so solicitous about every thing which has the appearance of pomp and magnificence, it has escaped these writers that sobriety in ornament is one great secret for rendering it pleasing; and that, without a foundation of good sense and solid thought, the most florid style is but a childish imposition on the public. The public however is but too apt to be dazzled by a false lustre. I cannot help thinking, that it reflects more honour on the religious and benevolent disposition of the present age, than on the correctness of its taste, that the works of Mr. Hervey have been so generally admired. The pious and benevolent heart which is always displayed in them, and the lively fancy which appears on some occasions, justly merit applause; but the perpetual glitter of expression, the swoln imagery, and strained description, with which they abound, are ornaments of a false kind. The following passage may be produced as a specimen.

It was early in a summer morning, when the air was cool, the earth moist, the whole face of the creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. Business had not quite shook off his sound sleep, and Riot had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene; all was still; every thing tended to inspire tranquillity of mind, and invite to serious thought.—Only the wakeful lark had left her nest, and was mounting on high, to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his



toil, and her fellow-songsters to their notes.—Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice! rise to offer the matin-song, and adore that beneficent Being, “who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.”—How charming to rove abroad, at this sweet hour of prime! to enjoy the calm of nature, to tread the dewy lawns, and taste the unrifled freshness of the air!—The greyness of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament; ’till, at length, the dappled aspect of the East is lost in one ardent and boundless blush.—Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame, to see so many supinely stretched on their drowsy pillows?”—*Hervey’s Reflections on a Flower-Garden.*

There is a certain degree of elevation to which prose may be permitted to rise. Its elevation however must not be perpetual: when the writer affects unvaried magnificence, it is probable that his reader will at length be seized with satiety. Ornament loses its effect when every page is crowded with embellishments.

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## CHAP. XXV.

### OF THE SIMPLE AND THE AFFECTED STYLE.

SIMPLICITY, applied to writing, is a term very frequently used; but, like other critical terms, it is often used in a very loose and vague manner. This circumstance has chiefly arisen from the variety of meanings attached to the word. It will therefore be necessary to distinguish these different significations, and to shew in what sense the term is properly appli-

cable to style. We may remark four different acceptations of which it is susceptible.

The first is simplicity of composition, as opposed to a great variety of parts. This is the simplicity of plan in dramatic or epic poetry, as distinguished from double plots, and crowded incidents. Thus we term the plan of Home's *Douglas* simple, and that of Dryden's *Spanish Friar* complicated; we speak of the simplicity of Homer's *Iliad*, in opposition to the digressions of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. In this sense, simplicity is the same with unity.

The second sense is simplicity of thought, as opposed to refinement. Simple thoughts are what arise naturally, what the subject or the occasion suggests unsought, and what, when once suggested, are easily apprehended. Refinement in writing expresses a less natural and obvious train of thought, which it requires a peculiar bent of genius to pursue. Thus we say, that Parnell and Goldsmith exhibit greater simplicity of thought than Donne and Cowley; Cicero's thoughts on moral subjects are natural, Seneca's too refined and farfetched. In these two senses of simplicity, when it is opposed either to variety of parts or to refinement of thought, it bears no proper relation to style.

In the third place, simplicity stands opposed to superfluous ornament, or pomp of language. Thus Jortin is termed a simple, and Gibbon a florid writer. In this sense, the simple coincides with the plain or with the neat style, which, as it has already been treated of, requires no further illustration.

To the term simplicity there is also another signification attached: this does not refer to the degree of

ornament employed, so much as to the easy and natural manner in which our language expresses our thoughts. In this sense, simplicity is compatible with the highest ornament; it stands opposed, not to ornament, but to affectation. Homer possesses this degree of simplicity in the greatest perfection; and yet no poet has more ornament and beauty.

A writer of simplicity expresses himself in a manner which every one thinks easy to be attained. There are no marks of art in his expression; it seems the very language of nature; we see in the style, not the writer and his labour, but the man in his own natural character. He may be rich in expression; he may avail himself of the beauties of figurative language; still however every thing seems to flow from him without effort; and he appears to write in this manner, not because he has studied it, but because it is most natural to him. Yet it must not be imagined that a style of this kind is to be attained without study.\* To conceal its own efforts, is said to be the perfection of art: and when we find an author's style characterized by a beautiful simplicity, we may conclude that this is the effect of natural ingenuity, aided by an assiduous attention to the rules of composition. Some writers have recommended, not merely simplicity, but a certain negligence of style, more particularly in familiar compositions; but I entirely agree with a learned Spaniard, Don Gregorio Mayans,

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\* "Itaque eum qui audiunt," says Cicero, "quamvis ipsi infantes sint, tamen illo modo confidunt se posse dicere." Nam orationis subtilitas imitabilis illa quidem videtur esse existimanti, sed nihil est experienti minus." (Orator, cap. xxiii.)

that although negligence may be pardoned, it is by no means to be praised.\*

Reading an author of simplicity, is like maintaining familiar conversation with a person of distinction, who lays open his sentiments without affectation or disguise. But a mode of writing which seems artificial and elaborate, has always this disadvantage, that it exhibits an author in form, like a man at court, where the splendour of dress, and the ceremonial of behaviour, conceal those peculiarities which distinguish one person from another.

The ancients are more remarkable for simplicity than the moderns, and the reason is obvious. The former wrote from the dictates of natural genius, and did not endeavour to model their own compositions according to those of others. When an author makes this attempt, he is always in danger of deviating into affectation. The more early Greek writers had no proper models to imitate; and accordingly they surpass those of every other learned nation in point of beautiful simplicity. This quality is highly conspicuous in the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Herodotus, and Xenophon. Rome can also boast of several writers of this description; particularly Terence, Lucretius, and Cæsar.

It has been remarked by Mr. Knight, that “ per-

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\* “ Non tamen adsentior Symmacho præcipienti in familiaribus scriptis negligentiam quamdam debere nos imitari; et multo minus Ennodio, qui ab eo edoctus ait, *legem esse in epistolis negligentiam*. Istæ sunt voces excusationem præparantium negligentiae suæ, ut hæc illis non solum condonetur, sed et laudi vertatur, tamquam ex arte profecta. At ego negligentiam, si alicubi reperio, facile condono, sed minime laudo.” (Majansii Epistolarum libri sex, præf.)



fection in taste and style has no sooner been reached than it has been abandoned, even by those who not only professed the warmest, but felt the sincerest admiration for the models which they forsook. The style of Virgil and Horace in poetry, and that of Cæsar and Cicero in prose, continued to be admired and applauded through all the succeeding ages of Roman eloquence, as the true standards of taste and eloquence in writing. Yet no one ever attempted to imitate them; though there is no reason to suspect that their praises were not perfectly sincere: but all writers seek for applause; and applause is only to be gained by novelty. The style of Cicero and Virgil was new in the Latin language, when they wrote; but in the age of Seneca and Lucan, it was no longer so; and though it still imposed by the stamp of authority, it could not even please without it; so that living writers, whose names depended on their works, and not their works upon their names, were obliged to seek for other means of exciting public attention, and acquiring public approbation. In the succeeding age the refinements of these writers became old and insipid; and those of Statius and Tacitus were successfully employed to gratify the restless pruriency of innovation. In all other ages and countries, where letters have been successfully-cultivated, the progression has been nearly the same; and in none more distinctly than in our own: from Swift and Addison, to Johnson, Burke, and Gibbon, is a transition exactly similar to that from Cæsar and Cicero to Seneca and Tacitus." \*

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\* Knight's Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, p. 427,

In the catalogue of English authors, there are several distinguished for a becoming simplicity of manner. Although Tillotson cannot be recommended as an elegant and polished writer, yet his style is remarkably simple and unaffected. It has already been observed that he has no pretensions to genuine eloquence, if that term be understood to include vehemence and strength of expression, the beauties of figurative language, and the correct and harmonious arrangement of sentences. His real merit however must not be overlooked. A constant vein of piety and good sense runs through all his works: his manner is earnest and serious; and so much useful instruction is conveyed in a natural style, that his works can never be suffered to fall into disrepute. They will be held in estimation as long as the English language is understood; not indeed as models of eloquence, but as the productions of an amiable writer whose manner is strongly expressive of his innate goodness of heart. "There is," says Goldsmith, "nothing peculiar to the language of Archbishop Tillotson, but his manner of writing is inimitable; for one who reads him wonders why he himself did not think and speak in that very manner. The turn of

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2d edit. Lond. 1805, 8vo.—Longinus, after having quoted some quaint conceits from Herodotus, Xenophon, and Plato, subjoins that all these improprieties are to be imputed to the *καινόςπουδον*, or love of novelty, "with which the writers of this age are almost frantic." *"Ἀπαντα μέντοι τὰ οὕτως ἄσεμνα διὰ μίαν ἐμφύεται τοῖς λόγοις αἰτίαν, διὰ τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις καινόςπουδον, περὶ ὃ δὴ μάλιστα κορυβαντιῶσιν οἱ νῦν ἀφ' ὧν γὰρ ἡμῖν τὰ γαθὰ, σχεδὸν ἀπ' αὐτῶν τούτων καὶ τὰ κακὰ γίγνεσθαι φιλεῖ.* (Longinus de Sublimitate, § v.)

his periods is agreeable, though artless; and every thing he says seems to flow spontaneously from inward conviction."\*

Sir William Temple is also remarkable for simplicity of style. In point of ornament and correctness, he rises a degree above Tillotson; though for the latter quality he is by no means remarkable. His language is chiefly distinguished by its smoothness and amenity. He not unfrequently becomes prolix and careless; yet he seldom fatigues the attention of his reader. No writer whatever has stamped upon his style a more lively impression of his own character. In reading his works, we seem engaged in conversation with him; we become thoroughly acquainted with him, not merely as an author, but as a man. With an author of this character we contract a kind of friendship.

Of the more correct and ornamental degree of the simple manner, Addison undoubtedly exhibits the most perfect example. In figurative language he is extremely rich, particularly in similes and metaphors; which are so employed as to render his style splendid without being gaudy. There is not the least affectation in his manner; we see no marks of labour, nothing forced or constrained. Great elegance is everywhere joined with great ease and simplicity. He is, in particular, distinguished by a character of modesty and politeness, which appears in all his writings. No author has a more popular and insinuating manner; and his works are also recom-

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\* Goldsmith's *Essays and Criticisms*, vol. iii. p. 147.



mended by the great regard which he constantly shews for virtue and religion.

The literary merit of Goldsmith seems to bear some analogy to that of Addison. His diction is easy and elegant, and at the same time free from every species of affectation. His language flows from him without perceptible effort; yet it is always such as it would be difficult to improve. The classical ease of his manner has seldom been equalled. He has exerted his talents upon a great variety of subjects; and on whatever subject he happens to write he is always read with pleasure. Dr. Johnson has very justly characterized Goldsmith as "a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness."\*

Sterne is generally mentioned as a writer of great simplicity of style; but his simplicity is not of the most graceful and elegant character. Yet his works do undoubtedly furnish examples of a style at once simple and ornamented. In support of this assertion, I venture to produce the following passage:

Maria, though not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms. Affliction had touched her looks with something that was scarce earthly. Still she was feminine: and so much was there about her of all that the heart wishes, or the eye looks for in woman, that, could the traces be ever worn out of her brain, and those of

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\* Johnson's Lives of English Poets, vol. ii. p. 291.



Eliza out of mine, she should not only eat of my bread, and drink of my cup, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.—Adieu, poor luckless maiden! Imbibe the oil and wine which the compassion of a stranger, as he journeyeth on his way, now pours into thy wounds. The being who has twice bruised thee, can only bind them up for ever.—*Sterne's Sentimental Journey*.\*

Dr. Ferguson's History of the Roman Republic generally displays an elegant simplicity of style; and his reflections are always those of a man of genius: his political speculations are not unworthy of a disciple of Montesquieu. The style however is not always correct; and perhaps it may sometimes be supposed to descend beneath the dignity of historical composition. The excessive ornament of Mr. Gibbon may probably have led him to adopt this plainness of expression: in many respects indeed these two writers form a complete contrast to each other. This work of Ferguson exhibits but a small portion of the eloquence which distinguishes his earlier Essay on the History of Civil Society.

The most conspicuous example which has lately been exhibited of a manly simplicity of style, occurs in the historical production of Mr. Fox. If the author occasionally employs a word or phrase which may be considered as somewhat homely or familiar,

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\* "What is called sentimental writing," says the earl of Orford, "though it be understood to appeal solely to the heart, may be the product of a bad one. One would imagine that Sterne had been a man of a very tender heart; yet I know from indubitable authority, that his mother, who kept a school, having run in debt on account of an extravagant daughter, would have rotted in jail, if the parents of her scholars had not raised a subscription for her. Her son had too much sentiment to have any feeling. A dead ass was more important to him than a living mother." (*Walpoliana*, vol. i. p. 133.)

it is undoubtedly to be attributed to his anxiety to avoid every appearance of pomp and affectation; and it is to be hoped that such a model may have some tendency to counteract the seductive examples of Johnson and Gibbon. He uniformly displays a genuine English style; and his thoughts are left to support themselves by their intrinsic dignity.

Of an author who has rendered his style much less beautiful by want of simplicity, I cannot point out a more remarkable instance than the earl of Shaftesbury. It has already been hinted that he is a writer in whom some beauties are blended with many deformities. His language is rich and musical; but he seems to have considered it beneath the dignity of a person of his rank, to speak like the rest of mankind. Hence he is ever in buskins, and arrayed in pomp and magnificence. In every sentence we discern evident marks of art and labour: we perceive nothing of that ease which accompanies the expression of a sentiment proceeding warm from the heart. In the use of figures and ornament of every description, he shews sufficient skill; but his fondness for them is too visible. Having once found a metaphor which pleases his fancy, he knows not how to lay it aside, but often pursues it until it becomes quite disgusting and ridiculous. What appears very surprizing, Shaftesbury was a professed admirer of simplicity; he is always extolling it in the ancients, and at the same time censuring the moderns for their affectation, and *raueness of fancy*. He possessed a false refinement of taste, without any warmth of passion, or vivacity of feeling. The coldness of his character led him to that artificial and stately manner which

appears in all his writings. He seems highly fond of wit and raillery; which he attempts to promote, but with very little success. His wit is always blunt, and his raillery stiff and awkward.

Bishop Berkeley has justly ridiculed this supposed rival of Plato,\* for his affectation and self-importance. In one of his dialogues, a speaker produces the book entitled *Advice to an Author*, and reads a brilliant passage from it in a declamatory tone, adjusting all the pauses as if he had been reciting a poem in blank verse. After he has finished his declamation, the dialogue proceeds in the following manner: "Euphranor, having heard thus far, cried out: What! will you never have done with your poetry? another time may serve: but why should we break off our conference to read a play? You are mistaken, it is no play nor poetry, replied Aleiphron, but a famous moral critic moralizing in prose. You must know this great man hath (to use his own words) revealed a grand arcanum to the world, having instructed mankind in what he calls mirror-writing, self-discoursing practice, and author-practice, and shew'd 'that by virtue of an intimate recess, we may discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide our *self* into two parties, or (as he varies the phrase) practically form the dual number.' In consequence whereof he has found that a man may ar-

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\* "The noble author of the *Characteristics*, our *British Plato*, as he has imitated the Grecian well, and happily transformed the various beautys of his diction and dramatic composition into the English language," &c. (Geddes's *Essay on the Composition of the Ancients*, p. 139.)



gue with himself; and not only with himself, but also with notions, sentiments, and vices, which by a marvellous *prosopopœia* he converts into so many ladies; and so converted, he confutes and confounds them in a divine strain. Can any thing be finer, bolder, or more sublime? EUPH. It is very wonderful. I thought indeed you had been reading a piece of a tragedy. Is this he who despiseth our universities, and sets up for reforming the style and taste of the age? ALC. The very same. This is the admired critic of our times. Nothing can stand the test of his correct judgment, which is equally severe to poets and parsons.\*

The philosophy of Lord Shaftesbury, as well as his style, has found its ardent admirers; and, if we may rely on the opinion of Dr. Hutcheson, his writings will be esteemed while any reflection remains among men.† There is some probability however that this prediction will not be verified.

From the account which has been given of the noble author's taste in composition, it may easily be imagined that he would mislead those who blindly admired him. We have one remarkable exemplification in Dr. Blackwell of Aberdeen, an author well known for his *Life of Homer*, *Letters on Mythology*, and *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*. He dis-

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\* Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, dial. v.

† Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, pref. Of Lord Shaftesbury's character as a philosopher, Sir James Mackintosh has more recently given a very favourable representation. (*Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. i. p. 331, 7th edit.) Gray's opinion may be learned from his *Works*, vol. ii. p. 313.



covers ingenuity and learning ; but it is infected with an extravagant love of the artificial style, and of that parade of language which distinguishes the Shaftesburian manner.

Beside those general characters of style which have already been pointed out, several others might perhaps be mentioned. Conceited writers, for instance, discover their spirit so much in their composition, that it imprints on their style a character of pertness ; though I confess it is difficult to determine whether this can be classed among the attributes of style, or is rather to be ascribed entirely to the thought. But to whatever class it may be referred, all appearances of it ought carefully to be avoided, as a most disgusting blemish in writing.

From the various remarks which have been suggested, it may be inferred that to determine among all these different manners of writing, which is positively preferable, is neither easy nor necessary. Style is a field that admits of great latitude. Its qualities in different authors may be very different, and yet in them all beautiful. Here genius must be allowed to expatiate, and scope must be left for that particular determination which every person receives from nature to one manner of expression more than another. Some general qualities indeed there are of such importance that they should always, in every kind of composition, be kept in view ; and some defects which we should always study to avoid. An ostentatious, a feeble, a harsh, or an obscure style, for example, can never be adopted with propriety ; and perspicuity, strength, neatness, and simplicity, are beauties which ought always to be studied. But with regard

to the mixture of all, or the degree of predominancy to be allowed to any one of those qualities in forming our peculiarly distinctive manner, no precise rules can be given; nor can we venture to point out any one model as absolutely perfect.

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## CHAP. XXVI.

### CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A PASSAGE IN THE WRITINGS OF ADDISON.

THE preceding remarks on style and its different species, have by no means exhausted the subject, though they may very probably have exhausted the patience of many readers; but instead of prosecuting these more general enquiries, we shall now proceed to a critical analysis of particular passages in the writings of eminent authors. An analysis of this kind will tend further to illustrate the subject; as it will suggest observations which we have not yet had occasion to make, and will exhibit in the most practical view the use of those which we have already made. In the prosecution of this plan, it may be proper to begin with Addison, who flourished at a period when English style had in a great measure assumed the form which it still retains.

As a perfect tragedy is the noblest production of human nature, so it is capable of giving the mind one of the most delightful and most improving entertainments.

This is an excellent introductory sentence: it is clear, precise, and simple. The first period of a discourse ought always to be of a moderate length. The mode however in which the participle *giving* is here employed, does not possess much dignity; and *affording* might perhaps be substituted with propriety. The different tenses of the verb *give* are often used in a manner which approaches to the colloquial or familiar style. "The Anacreontiques therefore of Cowley," says Dr. Johnson, "*give* now all the pleasure which they ever *gave*."

A virtuous man, says Seneca, struggling with misfortunes, is such a spectacle as gods might look upon with pleasure; and such a pleasure it is which one meets with in the representation of a well-written tragedy.

The first member of this sentence is harsh and disagreeable. "Such a spectacle as gods might *behold* with pleasure," seems more harmonious, and the collision of particles, "look *upon with* pleasure," is thus avoided. My present business is not with the author's sentiments: it may not however be improper to observe, that what he advances in the sentence now quoted, can only apply to those tragedies of which the chief personages are virtuous.

Diversions of this kind wear out of our thoughts every thing that is mean and little.

The word *diversions* cannot without manifest impropriety be employed to signify the more solemn amusements of the theatre. "*Diversion*," says Dr. Johnson, "seems to be something lighter than *amusement*, and less forcible than *pleasure*." It has nearly the same signification with *sport*. The tragical sports of the theatre, would be a strange expression.

They cherish and cultivate that humanity which is the ornament of our nature.

This metaphorical language is exceptionable. The act of cherishing and the act of cultivating bear no kind of analogy to each other, and therefore ought not to have been so intimately connected. The proper subject of the former must be possess of life; that of the latter must be inert matter. With what propriety, then, can the same object be represented as cherished and cultivated?

They soften insolence, soothe affliction, and subdue the mind to the dispensations of Providence.

This sentence is smooth and elegant.

It is no wonder, therefore, that in all the polite nations of the world, this part of the drama has met with public encouragement.

This sentence requires no particular consideration.

The modern tragedy excels that of Greece and Rome, in the intricacy and disposition of the fable; but, what a Christian writer would be ashamed to own, falls infinitely short of it in the moral part of the performance.

It was formerly remarked, that in the members of a sentence where two objects are either compared or contrasted, some resemblance in the language and construction should be preserved. This rule is violated in the above passage. A slight alteration will, in my opinion, improve the sentence: "The modern tragedy excels that of Greece and Rome, in the intricacy and disposition of the fable; but, what a Christian writer would be ashamed to own, falls infinitely short of it in the purity and beauty of the morality."

This I may shew more at large hereafter; and in the mean time, that I may contribute something towards the improvement of the



English tragedy, I shall take notice, in this and in other following papers, of some particular parts in it that seem liable to exception.

This period is arranged with clearness and perspicuity. Although in the former part of it *that* is employed as a conjunction, yet it afterwards occurs as a relative pronoun. Of this word Addison seems to have been remarkably fond.—*Which*, being never employed in any other way than as a pronoun, is more definite in its signification than *that*; whereas *that* is a word of various senses, sometimes a demonstrative pronoun, often a conjunction.\* In some cases we are indeed obliged to use *that* as a relative, in order to avoid the ungraceful repetition of *which* in the same sentence; but when we are under no ne-

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\* Here it is necessary to use the common grammatical terms; but the reader who wishes to trace the genuine origin and character of *THAT*, must consult Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, part i. p. 81, 272. part ii. p. 59. This writer has shewn that the word signifies *taken, assumed*; being merely the past participle of the Anglo-Saxon verb *thean, thegan, thion*. *It*, originally written *hit* or *het*, is of a similar origin; being the past participle of the Anglo-Saxon verb *hætan*, signifying to name or mention. "It and *THAT* always refer to some thing or things, person or persons, *taken, assumed, or spoken of* before; such only being the meaning of those two words. They may therefore well supply each other's place: as we say indifferently, and with the same meaning, of any action mentioned in discourse, either, *it* is a good action, or, *THAT* is a good action: *i. e. the said (action) is a good action*; or, *the assumed (action) is a good action*; or, the action, *received* in discourse, is a good action." (Part ii. p. 59.)

It is deeply to be regretted that the singular work of this most acute and ingenious writer is so diffuse, and in some respects so offensive, in its general texture; that he had not found some other vent for his politics and satire, and exhibited his valuable materials in a more condensed and classical form.

cessity of this kind, *which* is generally the preferable word. The following remarks on this subject occur in one of Cowper's letters. "Upon solemn occasions, as in prayer or preaching for instance, I would be strictly correct, and upon stately ones; for instance, were I writing an epic poem, I would be so likewise, but not upon familiar occasions. God *who* heareth prayer, is right. Hector *who* saw Patroclus, is right. And the man *that* dresses me every day, is in my mind right also; because the contrary would give an air of stiffness and pedantry to an expression that in respect of the matter of it, cannot be too negligently made up."\*

Aristotle observes, that the iambic verse in the Greek tongue was the most proper for tragedy; because at the same time that it lifted up the discourse from prose, it was that which approached nearer to it than any other kind of verse.

This sentence contains a great superfluity of words. The author's meaning may be expressed in the following manner: "Aristotle observes that the iambic verse in the Greek tongue was the most proper for tragedy; because, while it elevated the discourse a degree above prose, it approached nearer to it than any other kind of verse."

For, says he, we may observe that men in ordinary discourse very often speak iambics, without taking notice of it. We may make the same observation of our English blank verse, which often enters into our common discourse, though we do not attend to it, and is such a due medium between rhyme and prose, that it seems wonderfully adapted to tragedy.

In these sentences we shall find little to commend.

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\* Hayley's Life of Cowper, vol. ii. p. 314.

*Taking notice of it*, is a feeble and ungraceful close, which might easily have been avoided. In the other period the words, "which often enter into our common discourse, though we do not attend to it," are altogether superfluous. They are nothing more than the repetition of a circumstance of which we are sufficiently apprized, by the application of the remark quoted in the former sentence.

I am therefore very much offended when I see a play in rhyme; which is as absurd in English, as a tragedy of hexameters would have been in Greek or Latin.

This is a neat period.

The solecism is, I think, still greater in those plays that have some scenes in rhyme and some in blank verse, which are to be looked upon as two several languages; or where we see some particular similes dignified with rhyme, at the same time that every thing about them lies in blank verse. I would not however debar the poet from concluding his tragedy, or, if he pleases, every act of it, with two or three couplets, which may have the same effect as an air in the Italian opera after a long *recitativo*, and give the actor a graceful *exit*.

In the former of these sentences the phrase, "every thing about them lies in blank verse," appears liable to exception; and in the latter the two concluding members are not properly balanced.

Besides that we see a diversity of numbers in some parts of the old tragedy, in order to hinder the ear from being tired with the same continued modulation of voice.

The conjunction *that* is introduced without any propriety: by the insertion of it, this sentence, instead of seeming complete, has rather the appearance of a detached member. Why, in the present instance, *old* should have been preferred to *ancient*, it is not easy to discover.



For the same reason I do not dislike the speeches in our English tragedy that close with an hemistich, or half verse, notwithstanding the person who speaks after it begins a new verse, without filling up the preceding one; nor with abrupt pauses and breakings-off in the middle of a verse, when they humour any passion that is expressed by it.

This sentence is devoid of correctness and elegance. *To speak after an hemistich*, is certainly a very uncouth expression. The latter part of the period has a kind of mutilated appearance: one would be led to suspect that *I am not displeased with* had formerly occupied the place of *I do not dislike*; and that when the author made the correction, he forgot to adjust the whole of the sentence. "For the same reason I am not displeased with the speeches in our English tragedy," &c., "nor with abrupt pauses and breakings-off in the middle of a verse," &c. It would perhaps have increased the smoothness of the period, without detracting from its significance, had it been permitted to close at the word *passion*.

Since I am upon this subject, I must observe that our English poets have succeeded much better in the style, than in the sentiments of their tragedies.

*Since I am upon this subject, I must observe that—* These words, introduced without any apparent necessity, occasion a slight ambiguity. While they seem to refer to what was stated in the last sentence, they may also refer to the general subject of which the author is treating.

Their language is very often noble and sonorous, but the sense either very trifling or very common.

This sentence is perhaps capable of being improved:



"Their language is often noble and sonorous, while the sense is either very trifling or very common."

On the contrary, in the ancient tragedies, and indeed in those of Corneille and Racine, though the expressions are very great, it is the thought that bears them up and swells them. For my own part, I prefer a noble sentiment that is depressed with homely language, infinitely before a vulgar one that is blown up with all the sound and energy of expression.

*Great* is an epithet which critics do not commonly apply to expressions. The metaphorical language which occurs at the conclusion of this passage, is somewhat ludicrous: an object may be blown up with wind, but never with sound.

Whether this defect in our tragedies may arise from the want of genius, knowledge, or experience in the writers, or from their compliance with the vicious taste of their readers, who are better judges of the language than of the sentiments, and consequently relish the one more than the other, I cannot determine. But I believe it might rectify the conduct both of the one and of the other, if the writer laid down the whole contexture of his dialogue in plain English, before he turned it into blank verse; and if the reader, after the perusal of a scene, would consider the naked thought of every speech in it, when divested of all its tragic ornaments: by this means, without being imposed upon by words, we may judge impartially of the thought, and consider whether it be natural or *great* enough for the person that utters it, whether it deserves to shine in such a blaze of eloquence, or shew itself in such a variety of lights as are generally made use of by the writers of our English tragedy.

A great variety of circumstances is here introduced with accuracy and precision. In the second sentence we find *means* employed as a noun of the singular number; a usage which Johnson and Lowth\* do

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\* Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar, p. 19. Lond. 1762, 8vo. See likewise Dr. Crombie's Etymology and Syntax of the English Language, p. 27, 3d edit. Lond. 1830, 8vo.

not explicitly approve. On the other hand, Campbell\* and Priestley† contend for its propriety; and their opinion is supported by the authority of Addison, Pope, Robertson, Goldsmith, and many other writers of eminence.‡ It is certainly more agreeable to the general analogy of the English language, as well as to the etymology of the word, to vary it in the singular and the plural form; but our ears are too much habituated to the common practice, to relish the phrases "by this *mean*," "by that *mean*."

I must in the next place observe, that when our thoughts are great and just, they are often obscured by the sounding phrases, hard metaphors, and forced expressions in which they are clothed. Shakespeare is often very faulty in this particular.

In this passage there is nothing exceptionable, except a slight degree of incongruity in the metaphorical language.

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\* Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, vol. i. p. 352, edit. Edinb. 1808, 2 vols. 8vo.

† Priestley's *Rudiments of English Grammar*, p. 64, 3d edit. Lond. 1772, 8vo.

‡ Of awkward combinations of the indefinite article with nouns in the plural number, many other instances are to be found. The subsequent passage occurs in Gibbon's *History*: "When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was about fourscore years old; a last and valuable *remains* of the happy age of the Antonines." There is no necessity for using such a phrase as this, as its place could have been well supplied by *relique* or *remnant*. In the late Dr. Warner's translation of Isla's facetious work, we meet with this passage: "Motionless did our Gerund always stand, with his face reverently towards the altar, and his eyes nailed on an *Æsop's Fables* in his hand." (*Hist. of Friar Gerund*, vol. i. p. 241.) Nor is the translator led to this colloquial barbarism, by a wish to imitate the original, which stands thus: "con los ojos clavados en las *Fabulas de Esopo*."

There is a fine observation in Aristotle to this purpose, which I have never seen quoted.

Here the relative pronoun *which* refers grammatically to *purpose*, and not, as the sense of the passage requires, to *observation*. This defect might have been remedied by the following arrangement: To this purpose there is a fine observation in Aristotle, which I have never seen quoted."

The expression, says he, ought to be very much laboured in the unactive parts of the fable, as in descriptions, similitudes, narrations, and the like; in which the opinions, manners, and passions of men are not represented; for these (namely the opinions, manners, and passions) are apt to be obscured by pompous phrases and elaborate expressions. Horace, who copied most of his opinions after Aristotle, seems to have had his eye on the foregoing rule, in the following verses:

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri:  
Telephus et Peleus, &c.

Nothing can be more awkward than the parenthesis which is here introduced. The last period would perhaps be rendered more correct by substituting *in composing the following verses*, instead of *in the following verses*.

Among our modern English poets, there is none who was better turned for tragedy than Lee, if instead of favouring the impetuosity of his genius, he had restrained it, and kept it within its proper bounds.

The whole sentence discovers a confusion of ideas. We are first told that Lee actually possessed a genius equal to that of any of our modern tragic poets; though it is afterwards insinuated that he only would have possessed it, provided he had restrained it within due bounds. If a poet is naturally *turned* for tragedy, he certainly must possess

that *turn*, whether he subject his genius to the control of judgment, or allow it to produce such instances of extravagance as are to be found in the works of Lee.

His thoughts are wonderfully suited to tragedy, but frequently lost in such a cloud of words, that it is hard to see the beauty of them : there is an infinite fire in his works, but so involved in smoke, that it does not appear in half its lustre. He frequently succeeds in the passionate parts of the tragedy, but more particularly where he slackens his efforts, and eases the style of those epithets and metaphors in which he so much abounds. What can be more natural, more soft, or more passionate, than that line in Statira's speech, where she describes the charms of Alexander's conversation ?

Then he would talk—Good gods ! how he would talk !

The author has here expressed his sentiments with felicity. The language is correct and polished ; and though abounding in metaphor, it is free from affectation or impropriety.

That unexpected break in the line, and turning the description of his manner of talking, into an admiration of it, is inexpressibly beautiful, and wonderfully suited to the fond character of the person that speaks it.

As the words *wonderfully suited* occur in a sentence not far distant from this, they ought not to have been so soon repeated. The period might have closed thus : "and finely adapted to the fond character of the person by whom it is spoken." This arrangement would remove the intrusive pronoun *it* from the station which it occupies.

There is a simplicity in the words, that outshines the utmost pride of expression.

This sentence possesses considerable beauty.

Otway has followed nature in the language of his tragedy, and



therefore shines in the passionate parts, more than any of our English poets.

The verb *shines* is placed too near its compound *out-shines*.

As there is something familiar and domestic in the fable of his tragedy, more than in those of any other poet, he has little pomp, but great force in his expressions. For which reason, though he has admirably succeeded in the tender and melting part of his tragedies, he sometimes falls into too great a familiarity of phrase in those parts, which, by Aristotle's rule, ought to have been raised and supported by the dignity of expression.

Of the four sentences last quoted, three conclude with the substantive *expression* either in its singular or its plural form.

It has been observed by others that this poet has founded his tragedy of *Venice Preserved* on so wrong a plot, that the greatest characters in it are those of rebels and traitors.

The word *character*, when applied in this manner, denotes some person together with the assemblage of his qualities. It is improper to say "the greatest persons are the persons of rebels and traitors;" an expression to which that contained in the conclusion of the above passage is equivalent. The words *those of* should have been omitted.

Had the hero of his play discovered the same good qualities in the defence of his country, that he shewed for its ruin and subversion, the audience could not enough pity and admire him : but as he is now represented, we can only say of him, what the Roman historian says of Cataline, that his fall would have been glorious (*si pro patria sic concidisset*) had he so fallen in the service of his country.\*

This, though an agreeable sentence, is not free from

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\* Spectator, No. 39.

faults. The author speaks of the good qualities which the hero of *Venice Preserved* shews for the ruin of his country; but this is certainly an attempt in which good qualities were never exhibited. In this passage the words *ruin* and *subversion* are both used, though they do not serve to mark any different shades in the ideas.

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## CHAP. XXVII.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A PASSAGE IN THE  
WRITINGS OF SWIFT.

THE players having now almost done with the comedy called the *Beggar's Opera* for the season; it may be no unpleasant speculation, to reflect a little upon this dramatic piece, so singular in the subject and manner, so much an original, and which hath frequently given so very agreeable an entertainment.

This introductory sentence is not entitled to much commendation. *The players having now almost done with the comedy*, is a phrase not altogether free from vulgarity.

Although an evil taste be very apt to prevail, both here and in London, yet there is a point which whoever can rightly touch, will never fail of pleasing a very great majority; so great, that the dislikers, out of dulness or affectation, will be silent, and forced to fall in with the herd: the point I mean, is what we call humour; which, in its perfection, is allowed to be much preferable to wit; if it be not rather the most useful and agreeable species of it.

This sentence, though sufficiently perspicuous, is cer-

tainly devoid of elegance. *There is a point which whoever can rightly touch, is uncouth phraseology.*

I agree with Sir William Temple, that the word is peculiar to our English tongue; but I differ from him in opinion, that the thing itself is peculiar to the English nation; because the contrary may be found in many Spanish, Italian, and French productions, and particularly, whoever hath a taste for true humour, will find an hundred instances of it in those volumes printed in France, under the name of *Le Theatre Italien*; to say nothing of Rabelais, Cervantes, and many others.

The word to which the author refers in the beginning of this sentence, is *humour*; though, as he had mentioned *wit* at the close of the last, a slight degree of ambiguity is introduced. It would be more perspicuous to say, "the word humour is peculiar to our English tongue;" and in this clause, *the* seems more proper than *our*. The sentence is but unskillfully constructed. The member by which it is closed, follows with a very halting pace. I shall venture to suggest a few alterations: "I agree with Sir William Temple, that the word humour is peculiar to the English tongue; but I differ from him in the opinion, that the talent which it denotes is peculiar to the English nation. We discover abundant proofs of the contrary in many Spanish, Italian, and French productions; and whoever hath a taste for true humour, will find an hundred instances of it in those volumes printed in France under the title of *Le Theatre Italien*."

Now I take the comedy, or farce, (or whatever name the critics will allow it) called the *Beggar's Opera*, to excel in this article of humour; and upon that merit to have met with such prodigious success, both here and in England.

This sentence is very deficient in elegance.

As to poetry, eloquence, and musick, which are said to have most power over the minds of men; it is certain that very few have a taste or judgment of the excellencies of the two former; and if a man succeed in either, it is upon the authority of those few judges, that lend their taste to the bulk of readers, who have none of their own. I am told, there are as few good judges in musick; and that among those who crowd the operas, nine or ten go thither merely out of curiosity, fashion, or affectation.

This paragrah suggests no material observation.

But a taste for humour is in some measure affixed to the very nature of man, and generally obvious to the vulgar, except upon subjects too refined, and superior to their understanding.

“A taste for humour is obvious to the vulgar,” is a very inaccurate expression. It is humour itself that is obvious to the vulgar, not a taste for humour.

And as this taste for humour is purely natural, so is humour itself; neither is it a talent confined to men of wit or learning; for we observe it sometimes among common servants, and the meanest of the people, while the very owners are often ignorant of the gift they possess.

*The owners of a talent*, is an expression by no means elegant.

I know very well, that this happy talent is contemptibly treated by critics under the name of low humour, or low comedy; but I know likewise, that the Spaniards and Italians, who are allowed to have the most wit of any nation in Europe, do most excel in it, and do most esteem it.

Still the author discovers a want of precision in his ideas: a talent for humour can never with any propriety be termed *low comedy*.

By what disposition of the mind, what influence of the stars, or what situation of the climate, this endowment is bestowed upon



mankind, may be a question fit for philosophers to discuss. It is certainly the best ingredient towards that kind of satyr, which is most useful, and gives the least offence; which, instead of lashing, laughs men out of their follies and vices; and is the character that gives Horace the preference to Juvenal.

The first of these sentences is unexceptionable, but the last cannot be commended. In the expression, "the best ingredient towards that kind of satyr," the preposition *towards* is used with little propriety; either *in* or *of* would be preferable. The period might have closed with the word *vices*; for the next clause forms a complete sentence. "It is the possession of this talent that gives Horace the preference to Juvenal."

And although some things are too serious, solemn, or sacred, to be turned into ridicule, yet the abuses of them are certainly not; since it is allowed that corruptions in religion, politicks, and law, may be proper topics for this kind of satyr.

There are two ends that men propose in writing satyr; one of them less noble than the other, as regarding nothing farther than the private satisfaction and pleasure of the writer; but without any view towards personal malice: the other is a public spirit, prompting men of genius and virtue, to mend the world as far as they are able.

Public spirit is not an *end* which men propose in writing satire; it is one of the *motives* which impel them to write.

And as both these ends are innocent, so the latter is highly commendable. With regard to the former, I demand whether I have not as good a title to laugh, as men have to be ridiculous; and to expose vice, as another has to be vicious. If I ridicule the follies and corruptions of a court, a ministry, or a senate, are they not amply paid by pensions, titles, and power, while I expect and desire no other reward than that of laughing with a few friends in a corner? Yet, if those who take offence, think me in the wrong, I am ready to change the scene with them whenever they please.

These sentences are entitled to praise. The expression is pointed, and the arrangement accurate.

But, if my design be to make mankind better, then I think it is my duty ; at least I am sure it is the interest of those very courts and ministers, whose follies or vices I ridicule, to reward my good intentions ; for if it be reckoned a high point of wisdom to get the laughers on our side, it is much more easy, as well as wise, to get those on our side who can make millions laugh when they please.

My reason for mentioning courts, and ministers (whom I never think on, but with the most profound veneration) is, because an opinion obtains, that in the *Beggar's Opera* there appears to be some reflection upon courtiers and statesmen, whereof I am by no means a judge.

One might suppose that, in the last of these periods, the author intends to say, that he was no judge of courtiers and statesmen ; whereas his real meaning must be that he cannot judge as to the charge of this opera's containing reflections upon such personages. The period might be improved thus : " An opinion obtains, that in the *Beggar's Opera* there appears to be some reflection upon courtiers and statesmen ; a circumstance of which I am by no means a judge."

*Whereof, wherein, whereby*, and many similar compounds which were current during the age of Swift, are now rejected by almost every writer who aims at elegance of composition. The formation of *therefore, for there*, is not less awkward and anomalous ; but this word may be considered as indispensable. The kindred adverb *wherefore* could more conveniently be spared.

It is true indeed that Mr. Gay, the author of this piece, hath been somewhat singular in the course of his fortunes ; for it hath happened, that after fourteen years' attending the court, with a large stock of real merit, a modest and agreeable conversation, a hundred promises,

and five hundred friends, hath failed of preferment ; and upon a very weighty reason.

Than “ after fourteen years’ attending the court,” it is more proper to say, “ after fourteen years’ attendance at court,” or, “ after attending the court for fourteen years.” By a typographical error, the pronoun *he* seems to have been omitted before the words *hath failed*. “ *Upon* a weighty reason,” is an unusual expression; we commonly say, “ *for* a weighty reason.”

He lay under the suspicion of having written a libel or lampoon against a great minister. It is true, that great minister was demonstratively convinced, and publicly owned his conviction, that Mr. Gay was not the author ; but having lain under the suspicion, it seemed very just that he should suffer the punishment ; because in this most reformed age, the virtues of a prime minister are no more to be suspected than the chastity of Cæsar’s wife.

The last sentence is somewhat ambiguous. The construction might leave room to suppose that the prime minister had himself lain under suspicion of having written a libel or lampoon. The ambiguity may easily be removed : “ but *this poet* having lain under the suspicion.”

It must be allowed that the Beggar’s Opera is not the first of Mr. Gay’s works, wherein he hath been faulty, with regard to courtiers and statesmen. For, to omit his other pieces, even in his Fables, published within two years past, and dedicated to the duke of Cumberland, for which he was promised a reward, he hath been thought somewhat too bold upon the courtiers.

The latter of these sentences is rendered harsh and clumsy by the concurrence of so many circumstances : *published within two years past—dedicated to the duke of Cumberland—for which he was promised a reward.*

And although it be highly probable, he meant only the courtiers of former times, yet he acted unwarily, by not considering that the malignity of some people might misinterpret what he said, to the disadvantage of present persons and affairs.

The contrast contained in this sentence would be more emphatically exprest in the following manner: "And although it be highly probable he meant only *the courtiers of former times*, yet he acted unwarily, by not considering, that the malignity of some people might misinterpret what he said, to the disadvantage of *those of the present times*."

But I have now done with Mr. Gay as a politician; and shall consider him henceforward only as author of the *Beggar's Opera*; wherein he hath, by a turn of humour entirely new, placed vices of all kinds in the strongest and most odious light; and thereby done eminent service, both to religion and morality.

The position of the adverb *only* leaves us uncertain whether it be intended to qualify what precedes or what follows. Better thus: "But I have now done with Mr. Gay as a politician; and henceforward shall only consider him as author of the *Beggar's Opera*."

This appears from the unparalleled success he hath met with. All ranks, parties, and denominations of men, either crowding to see his opera, or reading it with delight in their closets; even ministers of state, whom he is supposed to have most offended, (next to those whom the actors represent), appearing frequently at the theatre, from a consciousness of their own innocence, and to convince the world how unjust a parallel malice, envy, and disaffection to the government, have made.

At the beginning of this quotation the pronoun *this* refers not to any particular word that has formerly occurred, but to the general tenor of the foregoing sentence. This practice is not consistent with com-



plete accuracy of diction. After the words *he hath met with*, there ought only to have been a semicolon; in its present state, the succeeding sentence has a mutilated appearance. The corresponding words *ministers of state*, and *appearing*, stand at too great distance from each other.

I am assured that several worthy clergymen in this city went privately to see the *Beggar's Opera* represented; and that the flooring coxcombs in the pit, amused themselves with making discoveries, and spreading the names of those gentlemen round the audience.

This sentence is smooth and correct.

I shall not pretend to vindicate a clergyman, who would appear openly in his habit at a theatre, with such a vicious crew as might probably stand round him, at such comedies and profane tragedies as are often represented. Besides, I know very well, that persons of their function are bound to avoid the appearance of evil, or of giving cause of offence.

The latter of these periods discovers a confusion of ideas. The author speaks of avoiding the appearance of giving cause of offence; but in such cases as that to which he alludes, it is only by appearances that offence can be given.

But when the lords chancellors, who are keepers of the king's conscience; when judges of the land, whose title is *reverend*; when ladies, who are bound by the rules of their sex to the strictest decency, appear in the theatre without censure; I cannot understand why a young clergyman, who comes concealed, out of curiosity to see an innocent and moral play, should be highly condemned; nor do I much approve the rigour of a great prelate, who said, he hoped none of his clergy were there.

In the expression "a young clergyman who comes concealed out of curiosity," there is some degree of ambiguity: it seems rather to imply that he is con-

cealed out of curiosity, than that he visits the theatre out of curiosity. The following arrangement is more correct: "I cannot understand why a young clergyman who, out of curiosity, comes concealed to see an innocent and moral play, should be so highly condemned."

I am glad to hear there are no weightier objections against that reverend body planted in this city, and I wish there never may. But I should be very sorry, that any of them should be so weak as to imitate a court-chaplain in England, who preached against the *Beggar's Opera*; which will probably do more good than a thousand sermons of so stupid, so injudicious, and so prostitute a divine.\*

The author speaks of a body *planted* in the city of Dublin; and thus employs a metaphor which is somewhat exceptionable, or at least unpleasing. Whatever opinion may be formed of his style, the meek and charitable spirit of this divine may be clearly discerned in the concluding sentence.

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## CHAP. XXVIII.

### CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A PASSAGE IN THE WRITINGS OF HARRIS.

Now the language of these Greeks was *truly like themselves*, it was conformable to their transcendent and universal genius. Where matter so abounded, words followed of course, and those exquisite in every kind, as the ideas for which they stood. And hence it fol-

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\* *Intelligencer*, No. 3.

lowed, there was not a subject to be found, which could not with propriety be expressed in Greek.

The first of these sentences might be improved by the omission of the words printed in *Italic* characters. To many readers the second must appear stiff and quaint. The manner in which the particle *as* is there used, is accompanied with some ambiguity: the sense may either be, that the words possess the same degree of exquisiteness with the ideas for which they stood; or that the words were exquisite as well as the ideas. If the latter was the author's meaning, the period may be cleared of all ambiguity by substituting *like* instead of *as*. In the last sentence there is an ungraceful repetition of the word *followed*.

Here were words and numbers for the humour of an Aristophanes; for the native elegance of a Philemon or Menander; for the amorous strains of a Minnervus or Sappho; for the rural lays of a Theocritus or Bion; and for the sublime conceptions of a Sophocles or Homer. The same in prose.

*Here were* is a phrase which perhaps approaches too nearly to colloquial language; but in other respects the period is elegant and sonorous. The English language does not readily admit of such elliptical phraseology as appears in the latter of these sentences.

Here Isocrates was enabled to display his art, in all the accuracy of periods, and the nice counterpoise of diction. Here Demosthenes found materials for that nervous composition, that manly force of unaffected eloquence, which rushed like a torrent, too impetuous to be withstood.

This passage is not destitute of beauty. The diction of the first sentence possesses a considerable degree of felicity.

Who were more different in exhibiting their philosophy, than Xenophon, Plato, and his disciple Aristotle ! Different, I say, in their character of composition ; for as to their philosophy itself, it was in reality the same. Aristotle, strict, methodic, and orderly ; subtle in thought ; sparing in ornament ; with little address to the passions or imagination ; but exhibiting the whole with such a pregnant brevity that in every sentence we seem to read a page.

“ Different, I say, in their character of composition.” This is a very unusual and a very awkward method of beginning a sentence. In constructing the last of these periods, the author seems to have forgotten that he was writing English : such a construction is foreign to the usage of our language, whatever it may be with regard to those of Greece and Rome. The whole passage discovers marks of affectation.

How exquisitely is this all performed in Greek !

The propriety of this sentence would not be diminished by a slight change in the collocation of the words : “ How exquisitely is all this performed in Greek ! ”

Let those who imagine it may be done as well in another language, satisfy themselves either by attempting to translate him, or by perusing his translations already made by men of learning. On the contrary, when we read either Xenophon or Plato, nothing of this method and strict order appears. The formal and didactic is wholly dropt.

*His translations* is an ambiguous phrase : instead of denoting what the sense of the passage requires, it may signify translations executed by Aristotle. “ The translations already made,” would have expressed the author’s meaning with sufficient accuracy.



Whatever they may teach, it is without professing to be teachers; a train of dialogue and truly polite address, in which as a mirror, we behold human life, adorned in all its colours of sentiment and manners.

To render the sense of this passage complete, the reader must, at the beginning of the second clause, supply some phrase equivalent to the following: "their writings exhibit a train," &c. As the sentence now stands, it is loose and disjointed.

And yet, though these differ in this manner from the Stagirite, how different are they likewise in character from each other? Plato, copious, figurative, and majestic; intermixing at times the facetious and satiric; enriching his works with tales and fables, and the mystic theology of ancient times. Xenophon, the pattern of perfect simplicity; everywhere smooth, harmonious, and pure; declining the figurative, the marvellous, and the mystic; ascending but rarely into the sublime; nor then so much trusting to the colours of style as to the intrinsic dignity of the sentiment itself.

Of these sentences, the last two, from the omission of the substantive verb, are deficient in idiomatical propriety. This is a piece of affectation of which Mr. Harris is very frequently guilty. The word *itself*, which occurs at the close of the last period, is redundant: without contributing to the sense, it tends to injure the sound.

The language, in the mean time, in which he and Plato wrote, appears to suit so accurately with the style of both, that when we read either of the two, we cannot help thinking that it is he alone who has hit its character, and that it could not have appeared so elegant in any other manner.

This is a very impressive sentence. It is not however unexceptionable: *in the mean time* is in this instance little better than an idle phrase.

And thus is the Greek tongue, from its propriety and universality, made for all that is great, and all that is beautiful, in every subject, and under every form of writing.

Grævis ingenium, Grævis dedit ore rotundo  
Musa loqui.

“A tongue *made* for all that is great,” has no very dignified sound. The sentence might, I think, be improved by substituting *fitted* instead of *made*.

It were to be wished, that those amongst us, who either write or read, with a view to employ their liberal leisure (for as to such as do either from views more sordid, we leave them, like slaves, to their destined drudgery) it were to be wished, I say, that the liberal (if they have a relish for letters) would inspect the finished models of Grecian literature; that they would not waste those hours which they cannot recall, upon the meaner productions of the French and English press; upon that fungous growth of novels and of pamphlets, where, it is to be feared, they rarely find any rational pleasure, and more rarely still, any solid improvement.

This long sentence is not constructed with a skilful hand: instead of arranging it with luminous propriety, he has had recourse to the expedient of introducing parentheses, and the miserable phrase *I say*. The period is thus rendered confused and clumsy. Towards the close however the cadence is agreeable to the ear.

To be competently skilled in ancient learning, is by no means a work of such insuperable pains. The very progress itself is attended with delight, and resembles a journey through some pleasant country, where every mile we advance, new charms arise. It is certainly as easy to be a scholar, as a gamester, or many other characters equally illiberal and low.

In the second sentence, it appears superfluous to use both *very* and *itself*: either the one or the other would have been sufficient. The cadence of the words *new charms arise*, approaches too nearly to that of poetry.

...expressed himself with

...the same quantity of ... and we ... that it is ... the I have ...

[illegible]

nit ends, there is something unlearned. The one appears susceptible of improvement: "They ter their ignorance under the bright example of individuals whose transcendent abilities with the common helps, have been adequate to great important undertakings."

truth, each man's understanding, when opened and mature, is a spittle of natural capacity, and of experienced habit.

s application of *compote* means a *colony*; nor were any obvious reasons for preferring it to *colony*, a word equally expressive, and not less worn. The former word is used as a substantiv, to note medicines composed of different ingredients: n applied as an adjective, it is chiefly used in ting of architecture. "Some are of opinion," Addison, "that the *compote* pillars of this were made in imitation of the pillars of Solomon's temple."

now the greatest use will be necessarily done, who possess the capacities, cultivated with the best habits. "Strenuous application, when adorned with valuable science, will be answered to the best success by nature, when either neglected, or applied to still lower purposes." And thus for the honour of nature and gratifying, they are able to render a man, if he will take the pains, actually more excellent than his natural capacities.

and thus for the honour of cultivation, "is an expression which signifies a cultivated man." "If he will take the pains necessary to be admitted into the degree of elegance."

and so much at present as is necessary to be done, "because they are done."



The language of prose and the language of verse ought always to be kept distinct. To this rule some of our writers do not appear to have paid proper attention: in the prose compositions of Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. Hervey, for example, we often find regular and sonorous verses. *It is easy to be a character*, has an uncouth sound; and the author might certainly have expressed himself with greater propriety.

The same application, the same quantity of habit will fit us for one, as completely as for the other. And as to those who tell us, with an air of seeming wisdom, that it is men, and not books we must study to become knowing; this I have always remarked from repeated experience, to be the common consolation and language of dunces.

The second sentence is not altogether correct: the conclusion of it does not bear a proper and legitimate reference to the beginning. When we meet with the words *as to those who tell us*, we are led to expect that the author's succeeding observation will apply immediately to those persons themselves; whereas it only applies to the language to which they have recourse for consolation. A few alterations may be suggested: "As to the observation which has so frequently been made with an air of seeming wisdom, that it is men, and not books we must study, in order to become knowing; this I have always remarked from repeated experience, to be the common consolation of dunces."

They shelter their ignorance under a few bright examples, whose transcendent abilities, without the common helps, have been sufficient of themselves to great and important ends. But alas!

*Decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile.*

In the expression *abilities sufficient to great and im-*

portant ends, there is something awkward. The sentence appears susceptible of improvement: "They shelter their ignorance under the bright example of a few individuals whose transcendent abilities, without the common helps, have been adequate to great and important undertakings."

In truth, each man's understanding, when ripened and mature, is a composite of natural capacity, and of superinduced habit.

This application of *composite* savours of pedantry; nor is there any obvious reason for preferring it to *composition*, a word equally expressive, and not less sonorous. The former word is used as a substantive, to denote medicines composed of different ingredients: when applied as an adjective, it is chiefly used in treating of architecture. "Some are of opinion," says Addison, "that the *composite* pillars of this arch were made in imitation of the pillars of Solomon's temple."

Hence the greatest men will be necessarily those, who possess the best capacities, cultivated with the best habits. Hence also moderate capacities, when adorned with valuable science, will far transcend others the most acute by nature, when either neglected, or applied to low and base purposes. And thus for the honour of culture and good learning, they are able to render a man, if he will take the pains, intrinsically more excellent than his natural superiors.

"And thus for the honour of culture and good learning," is an expression which appears somewhat antiquated. "If he will take the pains," is a phrase too homely to be admitted into a passage which aims at some degree of elegance.

And so much at present as to general ideas; how we acquire them; whence they are derived; what is their nature; and what

their connection with language. So much likewise as to the subject of this treatise, Universal Grammar.\*

This is a conclusion truly Grecian. I have sometimes been surprized that Mr. Harris did not commence his treatise in the same antique taste. He might, for example, have begun in this manner: "James Harris wrote the following discourse concerning the principles of universal grammar."†

After having examined this specimen of his style, the reader may be better prepared to appreciate the following encomium, pronounced by Dr. Knox. "Mr. Harris has also exhibited the Platonic graces in high perfection; and I cannot help considering it as a mark of defective taste that he is not more popular. His style appears to be one of the most elegant, classical, and judiciously ornamented among all the English writers of the present century. They who have raised their taste so as to perceive his beauties, will consider the style of many writers, whom they once admired, as comparatively barbarous. He who never tasted the pineapple, the peach, and the nectarine, may probably suppose that he enjoys the most exquisite flavour of the fruit-garden while he is feasting on a pippin, as he who never partook of the pippin, may devour a crab, and admire it as a delicacy."‡

\* Harris's *Hermes*, p. 418, 3d edit. Lond. 1771, 8vo.

† The most ancient philosophical treatise now extant begins nearly in the above manner. *Τάδε συνέγραψεν Ὁκελλος ὁ Λευκανὸς περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς φύσεως.* (Ocellus Lucanus de *Universi Natura*.)

‡ Knox's *Essays*, vol. iii. p. 40.



## CHAP. XXIX.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A PASSAGE IN THE  
WRITINGS OF ROBERTSON.

WHILE these sentiments prevailed among her subjects, Elizabeth thought she might safely venture to strike the blow, which she had so long meditated. She commanded Davison, one of the secretaries of state, to bring to her the fatal warrant; and her behaviour on that occasion plainly shewed, that it is not to humanity that we must ascribe her forbearance hitherto.

The latter of these sentences is not constructed with the usual skill of this elegant writer: the conclusion of it is by no means graceful. "Her previous forbearance" seems preferable to "her forbearance hitherto."

At the very moment she was signing the writ which gave up a woman, a queen, and her own nearest relation, into the hands of the executioner, she was capable of jesting. "Go," says she to Davison, "and tell Walsingham what I have now done, though I am afraid he will die for grief when he hears it." Her chief anxiety was how to secure the advantages which would arise from Mary's death, without appearing to have given her consent to a deed so odious.

In this passage every thing is accurate and luminous.

She often hinted to Paulet and Drury, as well as to some other courtiers, that now was the time to discover the sincerity of their concern for her safety, and that she expected their zeal would extricate her out of her present perplexity.

The phrase *now was the time* appears to be somewhat deficient in dignity. The author might have expressed himself thus: "She often hinted to Paulet



and Drury, as well as to some other courtiers, that an opportunity now occurred for discovering the sincerity of their concern for her safety."

But they were wise enough to seem not to understand her meaning.

A sentence which must thus involve an affirmative and a negative, can never possess much elegance.

Even after the warrant was signed, she commanded a letter to be written to Paulet, in less ambiguous terms, complaining of his remissness in sparing so long the life of her capital enemy, and begging him to remember at last what was incumbent on him as an affectionate subject, as well as what he was bound to do by the oath of association, and to deliver his sovereign from continual fear and danger, by shortening the days of his prisoner. Paulet, though rigorous and harsh, and often brutal in the discharge of what he thought his duty as Mary's keeper, was nevertheless a man of honour and integrity.

This passage does not seem to require any particular animadversion.

He rejected the proposal with disdain; and lamenting that he should ever have been deemed capable of acting the part of an assassin, he declared that the queen might dispose of his life at her pleasure, but that he would never stain his own honour, nor leave an everlasting mark of infamy on his posterity, by lending his hand to perpetrate so foul a crime.

*By lending his hand*, is a phrase which may perhaps be considered as unsuitable to the dignity of historical composition.

On the receipt of this answer, Elizabeth became extremely peevish; and calling him a dainty and precise fellow, who could promise much, but perform nothing, she proposed to employ one Wingfield, who had both courage and inclination to strike the blow.

The queen's calling Paulet a dainty and precise fel-

low, has little connexion with her proposing to have recourse to the assistance of Wingfield. The author's meaning might have been diffused into two distinct periods: "On the receipt of this answer, Elizabeth became extremely peevish, and called him a dainty and precise fellow, who would promise much, but perform nothing. She next proposed to employ one Wingfield, who had both courage and inclination to strike the blow."

But Davison remonstrating against this as a deed dishonourable in itself, and of dangerous example, she again declared her intention that the sentence pronounced by the commissioners should be executed according to law; and as she had already signed the warrant, she begged that no farther application might be made to her on that head. By this the privy counsellors thought themselves sufficiently authorized to proceed; and prompted, as they pretended, by zeal for the queen's safety, or instigated, as is more probable, by the apprehension of the danger to which they would themselves be exposed if the life of the queen of Scots were spared, they assembled in the council chamber, and by a letter under all their hands, empowered the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, together with the high sheriff of the county, to see the sentence put in execution.

In the last sentence the repetition of the word *queen* might without much difficulty have been avoided.

On Tuesday the seventh of February, the two earls arrived at Fotheringay, and demanding access to the queen, read in her presence the warrant for execution, and required her to prepare to die next morning.

We again meet with the word *queen* in this period, though it occurs twice in the last. *Execution* closes the former sentence; yet it is also found to occupy an important place in this. These, it must be confessed, are blemishes of a very trivial kind; but if they are blemishes, an author should endeavour to remove them. If however they cannot be removed

without weakening the expression, they ought certainly to be retained.

Mary heard them to the end without emotion ; and crossing herself in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, "That soul" said she "is not worthy the joys of heaven, which repines because the body must endure the stroke of the executioner : and although I did not expect that the queen of England would set the first example of violating the sacred person of a sovereign prince, I willingly submit to that which Providence has decreed to be my lot ;" and laying her hand on a Bible, which happened to be near her, she solemnly protested that she was innocent of that conspiracy which Babington had carried on against Elizabeth's life. She then mentioned the requests contained in her letter to Elizabeth, but obtained no satisfactory answer. She entreated with particular earnestness, that now in her last moments her almoner might be suffered to attend her, and that she might enjoy the consolation of those pious institutions prescribed by her religion. Even this favour, which is usually granted to the vilest criminal, was absolutely denied.

The author might have said, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ;" but the expression which he has adopted, produces a much better effect. The third of these sentences possesses considerable beauty.

Her attendants, during this conversation, were bathed in tears, and though overawed by the presence of the two earls, with difficulty suppressed their anguish ; but no sooner did Kent and Shrewsbury withdraw, than they ran to their mistress, and burst out into the most passionate expressions of tenderness and sorrow.

At the commencement of this period, the more obvious collocation of the words ought perhaps to have been adopted : "During this conversation, her attendants were bathed in tears." This seems in every respect preferable to the other mode of arrangement.

Mary, however, not only retained perfect composure of mind herself, but endeavoured to moderate their excessive grief ; and falling



on her knees, with all her domestics around her, she thanked Heaven that her sufferings were now so near an end; and prayed that she might be enabled to endure what still remained with decency and with fortitude. The greater part of the evening she employed in settling her worldly affairs. She wrote her testament with her own hand. Her money, her jewels, and her clothes, she distributed among her servants, according to their rank or merit. She wrote a short letter to the king of France, and another to the duke of Guise, full of tender but magnanimous sentiments, and recommended her soul to their prayers, and her afflicted servants to their protection. At supper, she ate temperately, as usual, and conversed not only with ease, but with cheerfulness; she drank to every one of her servants, and asked their forgiveness, if ever she had failed in any part of her duty towards them. At her wonted time she went to bed, and slept calmly a few hours. Early in the morning she retired to her closet, and employed a considerable time in devotion. At eight o'clock the high sheriff and his officers entered her chamber, and found her still kneeling at the altar. She immediately started up, and with a majestic mien, and a countenance undismayed and even cheerful, advanced towards the place of execution leaning on two of Paulet's attendants. She was dressed in a mourning habit, but with an elegance and splendour which she had long laid aside, except on a few festival days. An *Agnus Dei* hung by a pomander chain at her neck; her beads at her girdle; and in her hand she carried a crucifix of ivory.

In this passage it would be perhaps extremely difficult to improve a single sentence, either by substituting new words, or by altering the arrangement: every thing is distinct, accurate, and elegant.

At the bottom of the stairs, the two earls, attended by several gentlemen from the neighbouring counties, received her; and there Sir Andrew Melvil, the master of her household, who had been secluded for some weeks from her presence, was permitted to take his last farewell. At the sight of a mistress whom he tenderly loved, in such a situation, he melted into tears; and as he was bewailing her condition, and complaining of his own hard fate in being appointed to carry the account of such a mournful event into Scotland, Mary replied, "Weep not, good Melvil; there is at present greater cause for rejoicing. Thou shalt this day see Mary Stewart delivered from



all her cares, and such an end put to her tedious sufferings, as she has long expected. Bear witness that I die constant in my religion; firm in my fidelity towards Scotland; and unchanged in my affection to France. Commend me to my son. Tell him I have done nothing injurious to his kingdom, to his honour, or to his rights; and God forgive all those who have thirsted, without cause, for my blood."

"At the sight of a mistress whom he tenderly loved, in such a situation, he melted into tears." The author's meaning is, that he melted into tears on beholding his beloved mistress in such a situation; but the manner in which he has expressed himself is somewhat ambiguous.

The passage which we have been considering in the course of this chapter, is rendered more captivating by means of those dramatic touches with which it is interspersed. It is not to be supposed that any of those short speeches were originally delivered in the identical words which are here adopted by the historian; and all that can reasonably be required is, that he express the very same sentiment. On this subject, however, a different opinion has been maintained by the ingenious Dr. Ferriar in his Menippean Essay on English Historians: "An excess of polish and refinement, among other inconveniences, tempts the historian to suppress or vary the strong original expressions, which trying occasions extort from men of genius. Yet these, infinitely superior to phrases which have cooled in the critical balance, always form the brightest ornaments of a well composed history. They transport our imagination to the scene, domesticate us with eminent men, and afford us a kind of temporary existence in other ages. Few of our writers, excepting Lloyd,

have attended sufficiently to the preservation of these flashes of sentiment and intelligence. A single word sometimes conveys as much information of character and principles, as a whole dissertation."\* These observations are certainly just: but how is it possible to ascertain whether in every instance such expressions have actually been used by the persons to whom they are attributed? We even find that in reporting the expressions used on certain occasions by our Saviour, his disciples do not always coincide with each other: they express the same meaning, but in different words. If therefore a writer in our own times were to copy, from some ancient English chronicle, such expressions as are here alluded to, he might happen to deviate almost as far from those originally uttered, as he could do by varying the phraseology according to his particular taste.

With much difficulty, and after many entreaties, she prevailed on the two earls to allow Melvil, together with three of her men servants and two of her maids, to attend her to the scaffold. It was erected in the same hall where she had been tried, raised a little above the floor, and covered, as well as a chair, the cushion, and block, with black cloth. Mary mounted the steps with alacrity, beheld all this apparatus of death with an unaltered countenance, and signing herself with the cross, *she* sat down in the chair.

In the last of these sentences the pronoun *she* appears superfluous. I should prefer the subsequent reading: "Mary mounted the steps with alacrity; she beheld this apparatus of death with an unaltered countenance, and signing herself with the cross, sat down in the chair."

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\* Ferriar's Illustrations of Sterne, with other Essays and Verses, p. 234. Lond. 1798, 8vo.

Beale read the warrant for execution with a loud voice, to which she listened with a careless air, and like one occupied in other thoughts. Then the dean of Peterborough began a devout discourse, suitable to her present condition, and offered up prayers to heaven in her behalf; but she declared that she could not in conscience hearken to the one, nor join with the other; and kneeling down repeated a Latin prayer.

In the prose writings of modern English authors, the adverb *then* is seldom placed at the beginning of a sentence: but in a description of this solemn kind it perhaps would not have so good an effect in any other position. The author might have said, "the dean of Peterborough then began a devout discourse, suitable to her present condition;" but he has with propriety adopted a different mode of arrangement. The sentence does not close with much felicity: the last clause forms no due counterbalance to the one immediately preceding.

When the dean had finished his devotions, she, with an audible voice, and in the English tongue, recommended unto God the afflicted state of the church, and prayed for prosperity to her son, and for a long life and peaceable reign to Elizabeth. She declared that she hoped for mercy only through the death of Christ, at the foot of whose image she now willingly shed her blood; and lifting up and kissing the crucifix, she thus addressed it: "As thy arms, O Jesus, were extended on the cross; so with the outstretched arms of thy mercy receive me, and forgive my sins."

"She declared that she hoped for mercy only through the death of Christ." The position of the adverb *only* occasions some degree of ambiguity: instead of conveying what is evidently the author's meaning, these words may imply, "that through the death of Christ, she hoped for nothing besides mercy." This ambiguity however it would be difficult in the pre-

sent instance to remove, except by adopting a different phraseology. If we placed the adverb after *Christ*, the sense would still be left ambiguous; nor could the defect be remedied by placing it after *death*.

She then prepared for the block, by taking off her veil and upper garments; and one of the executioners rudely endeavouring to assist, she gently checked him, and said, with a smile, that she had not been accustomed to undress before so many spectators, nor to be served by such valets. With calm but undaunted fortitude, she laid her neck on the block; and while one executioner held her hands, the other, at the second stroke, cut off her head, which falling out of its attire, discovered her hair already grown quite grey with cares and sorrows. The executioner held it up still streaming with blood, and the dean crying out, "So perish all queen Elizabeth's enemies," the earl of Kent alone answered Amen. The rest of the spectators continued silent, and drowned in tears; being incapable at that moment, of any other sentiments but those of pity or admiration.\*

This passage forms a very proper conclusion to the beautiful narration which we have been employed in examining.

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## CHAP. XXX.

### OF THE METHOD OF ATTAINING A GOOD STYLE.

THE professed teachers of rhetoric do not undertake to impart capacity or talent to their pupils; nor do they pretend to communicate the art of fine

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\* History of Scotland, book vii.



writing by a series of mechanical rules.\* But as the best talents are inefficient without the aid of cultivation, the young student, who is less capable of directing his own enquiries, may derive some benefit from a few plain suggestions concerning the proper method of attaining a style correct and elegant.

We must always endeavour to obtain a clear and precise idea of every subject of which we propose to treat. This is a direction which may at first appear to have little relation to style; but its relation is extremely close. The foundation of fine writing is good sense, accompanied with a lively imagination. The style and thoughts of a writer are so intimately connected, that it is frequently a difficult task to distinguish what depends upon the one, and what upon the other. Whenever the impressions of objects upon the mind are faint and indistinct, or perplexed and confused, our style in treating of such objects can never be luminous or beautiful; and what we conceive clearly and feel strongly, we shall generally be able to express with clearness and with strength, provided we have attained to any practice in composition. This then we may be assured is an important rule, to think

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\* "Neque enim conamur docere eum dicere, qui loqui nesciat; nec sperare, qui Latine non possit, hunc ornate esse dicturum; neque vero, qui non dicat quod intelligamus, hunc posse quod admiremur dicere." (Cicero de Oratore, lib. iii. cap. x.) "Taste," says Dr. Beattie, "as far as it depends on the knowledge of rules, may be further improved by reading good books of criticism, and comparing them with the authors whom they illustrate. Sound judgment however we must acknowledge to be in a great measure constitutional; and no person will ever acquire true taste, unless nature has made him a man of sense." (Dissertations Moral and Critical, p. 188. Lond. 1783, 4to.)

closely on the subject, till we have obtained a full and distinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words, till we become warm and interested in it: then, and not till then, shall we find expression begin to flow. Generally speaking, the best and most proper expressions are those which a clear view of the subject suggests, without much labour or enquiry.

To form a good style, the frequent practice of composing is indispensably necessary. Many rules concerning style have been delivered; but no rules will answer the end without exercise and habit. At the same time, it is not every mode of composing that will improve style: this is so far from being the case, that by careless and hasty composition, we shall inevitably acquire a very bad style; we shall have more trouble afterwards in unlearning faults and correcting negligences, than if we had been totally unaccustomed to composition. At first, therefore, we ought to write slowly and with much care. Let the facility and speed of writing be the fruit of longer practice.

"I enjoin," says Quintilian, "that such as are beginning the practice of composition write slowly and with anxious deliberation. Their great object at first should be, to write as well as possible: practice will enable them to write speedily. By degrees, matter will offer itself still more readily; words will be at hand; composition will flow; every thing, as in the arrangement of a well-ordered family, will present itself in its proper place. The sum of the whole is this; that by hasty composition, we shall never acquire the

art of composing well; by writing well we shall come to write speedily."\*

We must not however be too anxious about words; we must not retard the course of thought, nor cool the heat of imagination, by pausing too long on every word which we employ. There is, on certain occasions, a glow of composition which should be preserved, if we hope to express ourselves happily, though at the expense of allowing some inadvertencies to pass. These must afterwards be scrutinized with a critical eye. If the practice of composition be useful, not less so is the laborious work of correcting; it is absolutely necessary to our reaping any benefit from the habit of composing. What we have written, should be laid aside till the ardour of composition be past, till our fondness for the expressions which we have used, have in a great measure subsided, and the expressions themselves be forgotten. By reviewing our work with a cool and critical eye, as if it were the performance of another, we shall discern many imperfections which at first escaped our observation. It is then the season for pruning redundancies; for examining the arrangement of sentences; and for reducing style to a regular, correct, and supported form. To this labour of correction all those must submit who would communicate their thoughts to others with proper advantage; and some practice in it will soon sharpen the eye to the most necessary objects of attention, and render the task much more practicable than might at first be imagined.

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\* Quinetilian. de Institut. Orator. lib. x. cap. iii.



With respect to the assistance which is to be derived from the writings of others, it is obvious that we ought to render ourselves well acquainted with the style of the best authors. This is requisite both to form a just taste in style, and to supply us with an ample stock of words adapted to every subject.

But we must beware of falling into a servile imitation of any author whatsoever. Imitation is always dangerous; it fetters genius, and is likely to produce a stiff manner. Those who are addicted to close imitation, generally imitate an author's faults as well as his beauties. No man will ever become a good writer or speaker, who has not some degree of confidence to follow his own genius. We ought, in particular, to beware of adopting any author's noted phrases, or transcribing passages from him, unless when we professedly act as mere compilers. Such a habit will prove fatal to all genuine composition: it is much better to have something that is our own, though of moderate beauty, than to affect to shine in borrowed ornaments, which will at last betray the utter poverty of our talents. A preposterous ambition to imitate or rival the characteristic manner of Johnson or Gibbon, has rendered many authors ridiculous who might otherwise have supported a respectable character. The style of each of those writers, eminent as they deservedly are, is not without faults; but whatever may be their beauties, no man of letters will ever obtain much distinction by imitating them with accurate servility. We generally find their deformities more faithfully copied than their beauties.\* Mr. George

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\* "It happens, unfortunately," as Dr. Whately has remarked,



Chalmers, an author utterly destitute of taste, learning, and ability, seems to consider himself as the most formidable rival of Dr. Johnson; and his *Life of Rudiman*, who deserved a very different biographer, is perhaps one of the most ridiculous samples of imitation which belong to any age or country.\* On these

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"that Johnson's style is particularly easy of imitation, even by writers utterly destitute of his vigour of thought; and such imitators are intolerable. They bear the same resemblance to their model, that the armour of the Chinese, as described by travellers, consisting of thick quilted cotton covered with stiff glazed paper, does to that of the ancient knights; equally glittering, bulky, and cumbersome, but destitute of the temper and firmness which was its sole advantage." (*Elements of Rhetoric*, p. 240. Oxford, 1823, 8vo.)

\* His attempts to imitate Johnson's strain of moral reflection are still more ludicrous than his attempts to imitate Johnson's strain of composition. This assertion I shall endeavour to justify by producing a few examples.

"Ramsay was now to enter into life, with an honest trade, and a fair character for his livelihood. And he was induced, as much by his sociability of temper as by the example of other citizens, to marry, in 1712, Christian Ross, the daughter of an inferior lawyer in Edinburgh." (*Life of Ramsay*, p. viii.) Soon afterwards the biographer is pleased to inform his readers, that "the same disposition for sociability prompted him to court the society of clubs, during a clubical period."

"To this school the boy walked every morning, carrying his daily provisions with him. He is said to have been constantly accompanied by a dog, which, when he had proceeded to the top of Tooting-hillock, the half-way resting-place, always returned home, after partaking of his victuals. This story is still remembered, as if there were in it something supernatural. We may suppose, however, that the excursion was equally agreeable to both parties: and when it was once known, that the dog was to eat at a particular place, at a stated hour, an appropriate allowance was constantly made for him. Whether *Rudiman* had a natural fondness for dogs, or whether a particular attachment began, when impressions are easily made, which are long remembered, cannot now be ascertained. He cer-

heads of composing, reading, and imitating, it may be proper to advise every student of oratory to consult what Quintilian has delivered in the tenth book of his *Institutions*; where he will find a variety of excellent observations and directions.

Those who are ambitious of attaining an elegant style, ought to read with attention the works of the most eminent poets.\* From this source is often derived a more delicate and elevated mode of expression, as well as of thinking. We find that the most excellent prose writers, both of ancient and modern times, are those who, during some part of their life, have applied themselves to the study of poetry; and here it will be sufficient to mention the names of Plato, Cicero, Fenelon, Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Addison, Johnson, Goldsmith, and Beattie.

It is an obvious but material rule, that we always study to adapt our style to the subject, and also to the capacity of our hearers, if we are to speak in public. Nothing merits the name of eminent or beautiful, which is not suited to the occasion, and to the persons to whom it is addressed. It is to the last degree awkward and absurd, to adopt a florid

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tainly, throughout a long life, had a succession of dogs, which were invariably called *Rascal*; and which, being springing spaniels, ever accompanied him in all his walks." (*Life of Ruddiman*, p. 4. Lond. 1794, 8vo.)

\* "Sed omnis loquendi elegantia, quanquam expolitur scientia literarum, tamen augetur legendis oratoribus et poetis." (*Cicero de Oratore*, lib. iii. cap. x.) "As the poets," says Dr. Lawson, "abound most in figures, it might be fit that all who mean to excel in eloquence should, at least in their youth, be conversant in their writings." (*Lectures concerning Oratory*, delivered in Trinity College, Dublin, p. 268, 3d edit. Dublin, 1760, 8vo.)

poetical style on occasions when it should be our sole business to argue and reason; or to speak with elaborate pomp of expression, before persons who are unable to comprehend our meaning, and who can only stare at our unseasonable magnificence. We might with as much propriety speak in an unknown tongue. These are defects not so much in point of style, as, what is much worse, in point of common sense. When we begin to write or speak, we ought previously to have fixed in our minds a clear conception of the end to which our chief attention is to be directed. This end we ought to keep steadily in view, and to it we ought to adapt our style. If we do not sacrifice to this great object every ill-timed ornament which may occur to our fancy, we betray a want of judgment. I cannot conclude the subject without this observation, that in any case, and on any occasion, attention to style must not engross us so much, as to detract from a higher degree of attention to the thoughts. To your expression be attentive; but about your matter be solicitous.



poetical style on occasions when it should be our sole business to argue and reason; for to speak with elaborate pomp of a person who is unable to nourish his own reason; and who can only starve his own judgment.

Wise men will speak in an unknown tongue. There are things not so much in point of style as what we ought to write or speak, we ought to be able to convey in our minds a clear conception of the end to which our attention is to be directed. This we can only attain by a steady inward view of the end to which our style is to be directed.

OF  
ILLUSTRATIVE, OF THE PROGRESS  
ENGLISH STYLE.  
SIR THOMAS ELYOT.  
(Died 1546.)

A GENTYLMAN, er he take a cooke in his seruice, wyll fyrst examyne hym diligently, how many sortes of meates, pottages, and sauces he can perfectly make, and howe well he can seson them, that they may be both plesant and nourishynge; yea, and yf it be but a fauconer, he wyll scrupulously enquire what skyll he hath in feedyng, called diete, and kepyng of his hauke from all sicknes, also how he can reclayne her, & prepare her to flight: and to suche a cooke or fauconer whome he fyndeth expert, he spareth not to geue muche wages, with other bounteous rewards. But of a scholemaister to whom he will commytt his chylde to be fed with learnynge and instructed in vertue, whose lyfe shalbe the principall monument of his name and honour, he neuer maketh further inquirie, but wher he may haue a schoole mayster, and wyth howe littell charge. And yf one per chance be founden well learned, whiche wyll not take paynes to teache



wythout great salarye, he than speaketh nothyng more, or els sayeth, What, shall so muche wages be gyuen to a schoolemayster, which would kepe me two seruantes? To whome may be sayd these wordes, that by his sonne beyng well learned, he shal receyue more commoditie, and also worshyp, then by the seruice of a hundred cookes and fauconers.

The thyrde cause of thys hyndrance is neglygence of parentes, whyche I note specially in this point. There haue ben diuers, as wel mean gentylemen as of the nobilitie, whiche delityng to haue thyr sonnes excellent in lernyng, haue prouyded for them cunning maysters, whose substantially haue taughte them grammer, & very well instructed them to speak Latin elegantly; whereof the parentes haue taken muche delectation, but when they haue had of grammer sufficient, and be comen to the age of xiiii yeares, and do approche or drawe towarde the astate of man, whych age is called mature or rype (wherein not onely the sayde learnynge, continued by muche experience, shall be perfectly digested and confirmed in perpetuall remembraunce, but alsoo more serious learnynge conteyned in other liberall sciences, and also philosophy would then be lerned) the parents this thing nothyng regardyng, but beyng sufficed that theyr children can onely speake Latin proprelye, or make verses withoute matter or sentence, they from thensforth do suffer them to lyue in idelnes, or els putting them to seruice doo as it were banyse them from all vertuous study, and from exerceyse of that which they before learned. So that we may behold dyuers yong gentylmen, whiche in theyr infancie and chylhoode were wondred at for theyr aptnes to learnyng, and

prompte speakyng of elegant Latine, now beyng menne, haue not onely forgotten the congruitie (as the commune word is) and vneth can speake one hole sentence in true Latin, but, that wars is, haue all lernyng in derision, and, in scorne therof, wyll of wantonnes speake the moste barbarously that they can imagine. (The Boke named the Gouvernour, f. 39. a. edit. Lond. 1565, 8vo.)

## SIR JOHN CHEKE.

(Born 1514; died 1557.)

What say ye to the number of vagabonds and loytering beggers, which, after the ouerthrow of your campe and scattering of this sedicious number, will swarme in euerye corner of the realme, and not onely lye loytering vnder hedges, but also stande sturdely in cities, and begge boldly at euery dore, leauing labour which they like not, and folowing idlenesse which they should not. For euery man is easily and naturally brought from labour to ease, from the better to the worse, from diligence to slouthfulnesse; and after warres it is commonly seene that a great number of those which went out honest, retorne home again like roisters, and as though they were burnt to the warres bottome, they haue all their lyfe after an vnsauery smack thereof, and smell still toward dayleepers, pursepickers, highwayrobbers, quarrel-makers, ye and bloudsheders to. Doe we not see commonly in the ende of warres more robbing, more begging, more murdering then before, and those to stande in the high way to aske their almes, whom ye

be afraide to say nay vnto honestly, least they take it away from you violently, and haue more cause to suspect their strength than pittie their neede? Is it not then daily heard, how men be not onely pursued, but vtterly spoyled, and fewe may ryde safe by the kings way, except they ryde strong, not so much for feare of their goodes, which men esteeme lesse, but also for daunger of their lyfe, which euery man loueth? Worke is vndone at home, and loyterers linger in stretes, lurck in alehouses, raunge in high-ways, valyaunt beggers playe in townes, and yet complaine of neede, whose staffe if it be once hote in their hande, or sluggishnesse bred in their bosome, they wyll neuer be allured to labour againe, contenting themselues better with ydle beggary then with honest and profitable labour. And what more noysome beasts in a common welth? Drones in hiues suck out the honie, a small matter, but yet to be looked on by good husbandes. Caterpillers destroy the fruite, an hurtefull thing, and well shyfted for by a diligent ouerseer. Diuers vermine destroye corne, kill polleine; engines and snares be made for them. But what is a loyteror? A sucker of honie, a spoyler of corne, a destroyer of fruite, naye a waster of money, a spoyler of vittayle, a sucker of bloud, a breaker of orders, a seeker of breakes, a queller of life, a basiliske of the common welth, which by company and sight doth poyson the whole countrie, and stayneth honest mindes with the infection of his venime, and so draweth the common welth to death and destruction. (The Hurt of Sedition, how grieuous it is to a Common welth, sig. H. ij. edit. Lond. 1569, 8vo.)



SIR THOMAS SMITH, LL.D.

(Born 1514; died 1577.)

At the first, all kings ruled absolutely, as they who were either the heades and most ancient of their families, deriued out of their own bodies, as Adam, Noa, Abraham, Iacob, Esau, reigning absolutely ouer their owne children and bondmen, as reason was: or else in the rude world amongst barbarous and ignorant people, some one then whom God had endewd with singular wisdom to inuent things necessary for the nourishing and defence of the multitude, and to administer iustice, did so farre excell other, that all the rest were but beastes in comparison of him, and for that excellencie willingly had this authoritie giuen him of the multitude, and of the Gentils, when he was dead, and almost when he was yet liuing, was taken for a god, of others for a prophet. Such among the Jewes were Moses, Iosua, and the other judges, as Samuel, &c. Romulus and Numa amongst the Romanes, Lycurgus and Solon, and diuerse other among the Greekes, Zamolxis among the Thracians, Mahomet among the Arabians. And this kinde of rule among the Greekes is called *tyrannie*, which of it selfe at the first was not a name odious: but because they who had such rule, at the first, did for the most part abuse the same, waxed insolent and proude, vniust and not regarding the common wealth, committed such actes as were horrible and odious, as killing men without cause, abusing their wiues and daughters, taking and spoiling all mens goods at their pleasures, and were not



shepheardes, as they ought to be, but rather robbers and denourers of the people, whereof some were contemners of God, as Dionysius, other while they liued like diuils, and would yet be adored and accounted for gods, as Caius Caligula and Domitian; that kind of administration and maner also, at the first not euil, hath taken the signification and definition of the vice of the abusers, so that now both in Greeke, Latine, and English, a tyrant is counted he who is an euill king, and who hath no regard to the wealth of his people, but seeketh onely to magnifie himselfe and his, and to satisfie his vicious and cruell appetite, without respect of God, of right, or of the law. (*De Republica Anglorum*; the Maner of Government or Policie of the Realme of England, p. 8. edit. Lond. 1584, 4to.)

ROGER ASCHAM.

(Born 1515; died 1568.)

I doe gladly agree with al good schoolemaisters in these points: to haue children brought to good perfectnes in lerning; to all honesty in manners; to haue all faults rightly amended; to haue euery vice seuerely corrected; but for the order and way that leadeth rightly to these poynts, we somewhat differ. For commonly, many scholemasters, some, as I haue seene, mo, as I haue heard tell, be of so crooked a nature, as, when they meete with a hard witted scholer, they rather break him, then bow him, rather mar him, then mende him. For, when the scholemaster is angry with some other matter, then will he

soonest fall to beate his scholler; and though he him selfe should be punished for his folly, yet must he beat some scholler for his pleasure, though there be no cause for him to do so, nor yet fault in the scholler to deserue so. These, ye will say, be fond scholemasters, and few they be that be found to be such. They be fond in deede, but surely ouer many such be found euery where. But this will I say, that euen the wisest of your great beaters do as oft punish nature as they doe correct faultes. Yea, many times the better nature is sorer punished: for if one, by quicknesse of wit, take his lesson readely, an other, by hardnes of wit, taketh it not so speedely, the first is alwayes commended, the other is commonly punished, when a wise scholemaster should rather discreetly consider the right disposition of both their natures, and not so much wey what either of them is able to do now, as what either of them is likely to doe hereafter. For this I know, not only by reading of bookes in my study, but also by experience of life abroad in the world, that those which be commonly the wisest, the best learned, and best men also, when they be old, were neuer commonly the quickest of wit when they were young. The causes why, amongst other, which be many, that moue me thus to thinke, be these few, which I will reckon. Quick wittes commonly be apt to take, vnapt to keepe; soone hote, and desirous of this and that, as colde and soon very of the same again; more quick to enter speedely, then able to pearce far; euen like our sharp tooles, whose edges be very soone turned. Such wittes delight themselues in easie and pleasant studies, and neuer pas forward in

high and hard sciences. And therefore the quickest wittes commonly may proue the best poets, but not the wisest orators; ready of tongue to speake boldly, not deep of iudgement, either for good counsell or wise writing. Also, for manner and life, quick wits commonly be in desire newfangled, in purpose vnconstant; light to promise any thing, redy to forget euery thing, both benefite and iniury, and therby neither fast to frend, nor fearfull to foe; inquisitiue of every trifle; not secret in greatest affaires; bold with any person; busy in euery matter; soothing such as be present; nipping any that is absent; of nature also, alwayes flattering their betters, enuying their equals, despysing their inferyours; and, by quicknes of wit, very quick and ready to like none so well as themselves. (The Scholemaster, f. 4. edit. Lond. 1579, 4to.)

#### JOHN POYNET, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

(Born about 1516; died 1556.)

This is the frute wher princes take all their subiectes thinges as their owne. And whereunto at leingth will it come, but that either they must be no kinges, or elles kinges without people, which is all one? But thou wilt saie, wherof cometh this common saieng, all thinges be the kaisers, all thinges be the kinges? It can not come of nothing. But by that that is all ready saied, ye see that euery man maie kepe his owne, and none maie take it from him, so that it can not be interpreted that all thinges be the kaisers or kinges as his owne propre, or that



they maie take them from their subiectes at their pleasure; but thus it is to be expounded, that they ought to defende that euery man hathe, that he maie quietly enioie his owne, and to see that they be not robbed or spoiled therof. For as in a great mannes house all thinges be saied to be the stuardes, bicause it is committed to his charge to see that euery man in the house behaue him selfe honestly, and doo his duetie, to see that all thinges be well kept and preserved, and maie take nothing awaie from any man, nor misspend or waste, and of his doinges he must rendre accompt to his lorde for all; so in a realme or other dominion, the realme and countreie are Goddes, he is the lorde, the people are his seruantes, and the king or gouernour is but Goddes minister or stuarde, ordained not to misuse the seruantes, that is, the people, neither to spoile them of that they haue, but to see the people doo their duetie to their lorde God, that the goodes of this worlde be not abused, but spent to Goddes glorie, to the main-tenaunce and defense of the common wealthe, and not to the destruction of it. The princes watch ought to defende the poore mannes house, his labour the subiectes ease, his diligence the subiectes pleasure, his trouble the subiectes quietnesse. And as the sunne neuer standeth still, but continually goeth about the worlde, doing his office, with his heate refreshing and comforting all naturall thinges in the worlde, so ought a good prince to be continually occupied in his ministerie, not seking his owne profit, but the wealthe of those that be committed to his charge. (A shorte Treatise of Politike Power, and of the true Obedience which Suiectes owe to Kynges



and other ciuile Gouvernours, with an Exhortacion to all true naturall Englishe men,\* sig. F. 7. 1556, 8vo.)

JOHN JEWEL, BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

(Born 1522; died 1571.)

This is M. Hardinges holy succession. Though faithe faile, yet succession muste holde; for vnto sutehe succession God hath bounde the Holy Ghoste. For lacke of this succession, for that in our sees in the churches of Englande wee finde not so many idolaters, necomancers, heretiques, aduouterours, church-robbers, periured personnes, mankillers, renegates, monsters, scribes and Pharisees, as wee maie easily finde in the church of Rome, therefore, I trowe, M. Hardinge saithe, wee haue no succession, wee are no bishoppes, wee haue no church at al. But S. Paule saithe, "Faithe commeth (not by succession, but) by hearinge, and hearinge commeth (not of legacie, or enheritance from bishop to bishop, but) of the woorde of God." They are not alwaies godly that succede the godly. Manasses succeeded Eze-

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\* "Compyled by D. I. P. B. R. W." that is, Dr. John Poynt, bishop of Rochester, and afterwards of Winchester. The book is supposed to have been printed at Strasburg, where the author was then living in exile, and where he died before the close of the same year. Some of his political speculations were remarkable for the age to which he belonged. Of Poynt, or Ponet, an account may be found in Blackburne's *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq.* p. 558. Lond. 1780, 4to.

chias, and Hieroboam succeeded Dauid. By succession the Turke this daie possesseth and holdeth the foure greate patriarkal sees of the church, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioche, and Hierusalem. By succession, Christe saithe, Desolation shal sitte in the holy place, and Antichriste shal presse into the rounge of Christe. It is not sufficient to claime succession of place; it behooueth vs rather to haue regarde to the succession of doctrine. (A Defence of the Apologie of the Church of Englande, p. 132. Lond. 1567, fol.)

THOMAS WILSON, LL. D.

(Died 1581.)

In the thirde part, I will open diuers contractes and bargaynes that are vsed to auoide vsurye. I haue neede of money, and deale wyth a broaker; hee aunswereth me that hee cannot helpe me with moneye, but yf I list to haue wares, I shall speede. Well, my necessitie is great: he bryngeth mee blotting paper, pakthreede, fustians, chamlets, haukes bels and hoods, or I wote not what: I desire hym to make sale for mine aduantage, askyng what he thinketh willbe my losse; he aunswereth, not paste twelue pounde in the hundred. When I come to receiue, I do finde that I lose more then twentye in the hundred (yea, woulde God that none had loste more). I beinge greeued wyth my losse, doe charge the broaker, and saye that I wil not receiue the money wyth suche losse; the merchaunt aunswereth

that he wyl not take his wares againe, and hauing my bille, careth not what become of me that haue borrowed. This is called a double stoccado, that is to saye, the stycking blowe, or the double stabbe. For at the firste, the poore gentleman is borne in hande, there is no money to be had, but is promised wares, to auoyde, or rather to mocke the daunger of the statute (but God is not mocked) and so wyth thys cruell blowe of wares, hee is made beleue that they will falle out not aboue twelue pound, or 20 marks at the most; but when hee commethe to receiue the nete money, the merchant and broker being agreed together, he is stabbed at the very hart, paying somtimes twenty pound, nay, shal I say thirty pound, I would it had been noe more with some; a wicked and a most horrible cruel dealinge: and once in for a hundred pound, he can neuer come out cleare againe, til hauynge mortgaged his landes (whiche is the next parte to be played and practised) hee bee forced in the ende to sell the same outright. And so, betwene the merchaunt and the broaker, the poore gentleman is caught in the cony clapper, to liue with the losse of thirty pound in the hundred at the least. And yet if there were plaine dealyng in the matter, it were the more sauourye: but the merchaunt is agreed with the broaker to buy his own wares agayne, and to pay 70. l. for that which the gentleman must paye him a hundred pound for, at the yeres ende. Is not this vsury? is it not vsurye, thynke you, in the deuils name? Now surely vnhappye is hee that dealeth with such diuelish merchaunts, or others whatsoever; for of all cutthroate in the world, these are the absolute horrible, and



most detestable monsters that liue. And God kepe all playne and true dealing men from the dangers of all such false and craftie hipocriticall harlottes,\* and greedye cormorantes in a common weale. (A Discourse vppon Vsurye, by waye of Dialogue and Oracions, for the better varietye, and more delite of all those that shall reade thys treatise, f. 99. b. Lond. 1572, 8vo.)

EDMUND SPENSER.

(Born about 1552; died 1599.)

Evill things, being decked and attired with the gay attire of goodly words, may easily deceive, and carry away the affection of a yong mind, that is not well stayed, but desirous by some bolde adventures to make prooffe of himself; for being, as they all be, broght up idly, without awe of parents, without precepts of masters, and without feare of offence, not being directed nor imployed in any course of life which may carry them to vertue, [they] will easily be drawne to follow such as any shall set before them, for a yong minde cannot rest; if he be not still busied in some goodnesse, he will finde himselfe such businesse as shall soone busie all about him. In

\* This word, which merely denotes a person *hired*, was originally applied to males as well as females. See Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, part ii. p. 149. Bellenden, archdeacon of Moray, expresses himself in the following terms:

Sen thow contenis me vailzeand men and wyse

Than euir was red in ony buke but doubt,

Gif ony churle or velane the dispysse,

Byd hence hym, *harlot*, he is not of this rout.



which if he shall find any to praise him, and to give him encouragement, as those bardes and rythmers doe for little reward, or a share of a stolne cow, then waxeth he most insolent and halfe madde with the love of himselfe and his own lewd deeds. And as for words to set forth such lewdnes, it is not hard for them to give a goodly and painted shew thereunto, borrowed even from the praises which are proper to vertue it selfe. As of a most notorious thiefe and wicked out-law, which had lived all his life-time of spoyles and robberies, one of their bardes in his praise will say, that he was none of the idle milkesops that was brought up by the fire side, but that most of his dayes he spent in armes and valiant enterprises; that he did never eat his meat before he had won it with his sword; that he lay not all night slugging in a cabin under his mantle, but used commonly to keepe others waking to defend their lives, and did light his candle at the flames of their houses, to leade him in the darknesse; that the day was his night, and the night his day; that he loved not to be long woiing of wenches to yeeld to him, but where he came he tooke by force the spoyle of other mens love, and left but lamentation to their lovers; that his musick was not the harpe, nor layes of love, but the cryes of people, and clashing of armor; and finally that he died not bewayled of many, but made many waile when he died, that dearely bought his death. (A View of the State of Ireland, written dialogue-wise between Eudoxus and Irenæus, p. 52.)\*

\* This work occurs in a volume bearing the following title: "The Historie of Ireland, collected by three learned avthors, viz. Meredith

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

(Born 1552; died 1618.)

If we seeke a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundlesse ambition in mortall men, we may adde to that which hath been alreadie said, that the kings and princes of the world have alwaies laid before them the actions, but not the ends of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glorie of the one, but they never minde the miserie of the other, till they finde the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsell of Death, upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word; which God, with all the words of his law, promises, or threats, doth infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is beleevd; God, which hath made him, and loves him, is alwaies deferred. "I have considered (saith Salomon) all the workes that are under the sunne, and behold, all is vanitie and vexation of spirit:" but who beleeves it till Death tels it us? It was Death which, opening the conscience of Charles the fift, made him enjoyne his sonne Philip to restore Navarre; and King Francis the first of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Ca-

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Hanner, Doctor in Divinitie, Edmvd Campion, sometime Fellow of St. Johns Colledge in Oxford, and Edmvd Spenser, Esq." Dublin, 1633, fol.

brieres, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himselfe. He tels the proud and insolent, that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them crie, complaine, and repent; yea, even to hate their forepassed happinesse. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing, but in the gravell that fils his mouth. He holds a glasse before the eyes of the most beautifull, and makes them see therein their deformitie and rottennesse; and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just, and mightie Death! whom none could advise, thou hast perswaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawne together all the farre stretched greatnesse, all the pride, crueltie, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet*. (The Historie of the World, book v. p. 669. Lond. 1614, fol.)

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

(Born 1554; died 1586.)

Let learned Greece in any of her manifold sciences be able to shew me one booke before Musæus, Homer, and Hesiodus, all three nothing els but poets. Nay, let any historie be brought, that can say any writers were there before them, if they were not men of the same skil, as Orpheus, Linus, and some other are named; who hauing beene the first of that coun-



try that made pens deliuerers of their knowledge to their posterity, may iustly chalenge to bee called their fathers in learning: for not only in time they had this priority, (although in it self antiquity be venerable), but went before them, as causes to drawe, with their charming sweetnes, the wild vntamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as Amphion was sayde to moue stones with his poetrie to build Thebes, and Orpheus to be listened to by beastes, indeed stony and beastly people: so among the Romans was Liuius Andronicus, and Ennius: so in the Italian language, the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of science, were the poets Dante, Boccace, and Petrarch: so in our English, were Gower and Chawcer; after whom, encouraged and delighted with theyr excellent fore-going, others haue followed to beautifie our mother tongue, as wel in the same kinde as in other arts.

This did so notably shewe it selfe, that the philosophers of Greece durst not a long time appeare to the worlde but vnder the masks of poets. So Thales, Empedocles, and Parmenides, sange their naturall philosophie in verses: so did Pythagoras and Phocilides their morral counsells; so did Tirteus in war matters, and Solon in matters of policie; or rather, they beeing poets, dyd exercise their delightful vaine in those points of highest knowledge, which before them lay hid to the world. For that wise Solon was directly a poet, it is manifest, hauing written in verse the notable fable of the Atlantick Iland, which was continued by Plato.

And truly, euen Plato whosoener well considereth, shall find, that in the body of his work, though the



inside and strength were philosophy, the skinne as it were and beautie depended most of poetrie: for all standeth vpon dialogues, wherein he faineth many honest burgesses of Athens to speake of such matters, that if they had been sette on the racke, they would neuer haue confessed them: besides, his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacie of a walke, with enterlacing meere tales, as Giges ring, and others, which who knoweth not to be flowers of poetrie, did neuer walke into Apollos garden. (An Apologie for Poetrie, sig. B. 2. Lond. 1595, 4to.)

RICHARD HOOKER.

(Born 1554; died 1600.)

They of whome God is altogether vnapprehended, are but few in number, and for grosnes of wit such, that they hardly and scarcely seeme to hold the place of humane being. These we should iudge to be of all others most miserable, but that a wretcheder sort there are, on whome whereas nature hath bestowed riper capacitie, their euill disposition seriouslie goeth about therewith to apprehend God as being not God. Whereby it commeth to passe, that of these two sorts of men, both godlesse, the one hauing vtterly no knowledge of God, the other studie how to perswade themselues that there is no such thing to be knowne. The fountaine and wellspring of which impietie is a resolved purpose of minde to reape in this world what sensuall profit or pleasure soeuer the world yeeldeth, and not to be barred from any what-

soeuer meanes auailable thereunto. And that this is the very radicall cause of their atheisme, no man I thinke will doubt which considereth what paines they take to destroy those principall spurres and motiues vnto all vertue, the creation of the world, the prouidence of God, the resurrection of the dead, the ioyes of the kingdome of heauen, and the endlesse paines of the wicked, yea, aboue all things the authoritie of Scripture, because on these points it euermore beateth, and the soules immortalitie, which graunted, draweth easily after it the rest, as a voluntarie traine. Is it not wonderfull that base desires should so extinguish in men the sense of their owne excellencie, as to make them willing that their soules should be like to the soules of beasts, mortall and corruptible with their bodies? Till some admirable or vnusuall accident happen (as it hath in some) to worke the beginning of a better alteration in their mindes, disputation about the knowledge of God with such kinde of persons commonly preuaileth little. For how should the brightnes of wisdom shine, where the windowes of the soul are of very set purpose closed? True religion hath many things in it, the onely mention whereof gauleth and troubleth their mindes. Being therefore loath that inquirie into such matters should breede a perswasion in the ende contrarie vnto that they embrace, it is their endeuor to banish, as much as in them lyeth, quite and cleane from their cogitation whatsoever may sound that way. But it commeth many times to passe (which is their torment) that the thing they shunne doth follow them; truth as it were euen obtruding it selfe into their knowledge, and not per-

mitting them to be so ignorant as they would be. Whereupon, in as much as the nature of man is unwilling to continue doing that wherein it shall alwayes condemne it selfe, they continuing still obstinate to followe the course which they haue begunne, are driven to devise all the shifts that wit can inuent for the smothering of this light, all that may but with any the least shewe of possibilitie stay their mindes from thinking that true, which they hartely wish were false, but cannot thinke it so, without some scruple and feare of the contrarie. (Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie, the fift booke, p. 5. Lond. 1597, fol.)

FRANCIS BACON,

LORD VERULAM, VISCOUNT ST. ALBANS.

(Born 1561 ; died 1626.)

Thus haue I concluded this portion of learning touching civill knowledge, and with civill knowledge haue concluded humane philosophy, and with humane philosophy, philosophy in generall ; and being now at some pause, looking backe into that I haue passed through, this writing seemeth to mee (*si nunquam fallit imago*) as far as a man can judge of his owne worke, not much better then that noise or sound which musitians make while they are tuning their instruments, which is nothing pleasant to heare, but yet is a cause why the musique is sweeter afterwards. So haue I been content to tune the instruments of the Muses, that they may play that haue better



hands. And surely when I set before me the condition of these times, in which learning hath made her third visitation, or circuit, in all the qualities thereof; as the excellency and vivacity of the wits of this age; the noble helps and lights which we have by the traavailes of ancient writers; the art of printing, which communicateth bookes to men of all fortunes; the opennes of the world by nauigation, which hath disclosed multitudes of experiments, and a masse of naturall history; the leasure wherewith these times abound, not imploying men so generally in civill bussinesse as the states of Græcia did, in respect of their popularity, and the state of Rome, in respect of the greatnesse of their monarchy; the present disposition of these times at this instant to peace; the consumption of all that ever can be said in controuersies of religion, which haue so much diuerted men from other sciences; the perfection of your Majesties learning, which as a Phoenix may call whole volies of wits to follow you; and the inseparable propriety of time, which is euer more and more to disclose truth; I cannot but be raised to this perswasion, that this third period of time will farre surpasses that of the Grecian and Romane learning: onely if men will know their owne strength, and their owne weakness both; and take, one from the other, light of invention, and not fire of contradiction, and esteeme of the inquisition of truth, as of an enterprise, and not as of a quality or ornament, and imploy wit and magnificence to things of worth and excellency, and not to things vulgar, and of popular estimation. (Two bookes of the Proficience and Advancement of



Learning, divine and humane, p. 314. edit. Oxford, 1633, 4to.)

BENJAMIN JONSON.

(Born 1574; died 1637.)

For a man to write well, there are required three necessities; to reade the best authors; observe the best speakers; and much exercise of his owne style. In style to consider what ought to be written, and after what manner; hee must first thinke, and ex-cogitate his matter; then choose his words, and examine the weight of either; then take care in placing and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely; and to doe this with diligence and often. No matter how slow the style be at first, so it be labour'd and accurate; seeke the best, and be not glad of the forward conceits, or first words, that offer themselves to us; but judge of what wee invent, and order what wee approve. Repeat often what wee have formerly written; which, beside that it helps the consequence, and makes the juncture better, it quickens the heate of imagination, that often cooles in the time of setting downe, and gives it new strength, as if it grew lustier by the going back: as wee see in the contention of leaping, they jumpe farthest, that fetch their race largest; or, as in throwing a dart or iavelin, wee force back our armes, to make our loose the stronger. Yet, if we have a faire gale of wind, I forbid not the steering out of our sayle, so the favour of the gale deceive

us not. For all that wee invent doth please us in the conception or birth; else we would never set it downe. But the safest is to returne to our judgement, and handle over againe those things, the easinesse of which might make them justly suspected. So did the best writers in their beginnings; they impos'd upon themselves care and industry. They did nothing rashly. They obtain'd first to write well, and then custome made it easie, and a habit. By little and little, their matter shew'd it selfe to 'hem, more plentifully; their words answer'd, their composition followed; and all, as in a well-order'd family, presented it selfe in the place. So that the summe of all is; ready writing makes not good writing; but good writing brings on ready writing: yet when wee thinke wee have got the faculty, it is even then good to resist it; as to give a horse a check sometimes with bit, which doth not so much stop his course, as stirre his mettle. (Discoveries,\* p. 115. Workes, vol. ii. Lond. 1640, 2 vols. fol.)

THOMAS GATAKER, B.D.

(Born 1574; died 1654.)

It is a point of vaine, yea of impious curiositie, to enquire into those things that God hath concealed and kept in his owne power: in which regard therefore our Sauour reprooueth his disciples, when euen

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\* The reader will meet with few *discoveries* in the passage now quoted: several of the observations contained in it are borrowed from Quintilian.

by lawfull meanes they enquired into things of that nature; as also he rebuked Peter by name for being ouer inquisitiue in that kinde. But where God hath denied men ordinary meanes of discouerie, there doth he reserue and keepe things in his own power; concerning which therefore that rule of Gods spirit holdeth, "Things concealed belong to God, things reuealed to vs." So that, though they be things that concerne vs, and might be of some vse to vs, if by ordinary meanes and direct courses we could come to discouer them, yet when God hath either so concealed, or suffered them so to be concealed from vs, that by ordinary courses they cannot be discouered, it is not lawfull for vs to seeke to come to notice of them by extraordinary meanes, (no more than it was for our Sauour Christ, as he was man, and made for vs vnder the law, to seeke to his father to haue stones turned into bread, when food failed him); but we must be content with the good pleasure of God, and rest satisfied with so much as by lawfull meanes may be knowne, vnlesse we will make our selues guiltie of vnlawfull curiositie. \* \* \*

It was death for any man to looke into the Arke, or but to peepe into the Holy of Holies. And as it is sinne for a man to search and prie into what God hath concealed, so to search by such courses as he hath not warranted, or to search into such things as it is therefore apparent that hee hath concealed, and would haue hid from vs, in that he hath taken away all ordinary meanes of discouery, and offereth not extraordinary meanes of himselfe; which howsoever wee may accept, yea we ought not to refuse, when God offereth and suggesteth them to vs, for that were



to contemne God; so we ought not to desire or request at Gods hands, much lesse frame them to our selues, when God shall not see good so to doe; for that is manifestly to tempt God. (Of the Natvre and Vse of Lots, a Treatise historicall and theologicall, p. 357, 2d edit. Lond. 1627, 4to.)

JAMES USHER, ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH.

(Born 1580; died 1656.)

The next point that offereth it selfe unto our consideration, is that of Purgatory. Whereof if any man doe doubt, Cæsarius (a Germane monke of the Cistercian order) adviseth him for his resolution to make a journey into Scotland, (the greater Scotland he meaneth), and there to enter into S. Patricks Purgatory; and then he giveth him his word, that he shall no more doubt of the paines of Purgatory. If Doctor Terry (who commendeth this unto us as the testimony of a most famous author) should chance to have a doubtfull thought hereafter of the pains of Purgatory, I would wish his ghostly father to injoyne him no other penance, but the undertaking of a pilgrimage unto S. Patricks Purgatorie, to see whether he would prove any wiser when he came from thence than when he went thither. In the meane time, untill he hath made some further experiment of the matter, he shall give me leave to beleeve him that he hath beene there, and hath cause to know the place as wel as any, (the iland wherein it is seated, being held by him as a part of the inheritance descended unto him from his ancestours),



and yet professeth that hee found nothing therein, which might afford him any argument to thinke there was a Purgatorie. I passe by, that Nennius, and Probus, and all the elder writers of the life of S. Patrick that I have met withall, speake not one word of any such place; and that Henrie the monke of Saltrey, in the daies of King Stephen, is the first in whom I could ever finde any mention thereof. This only would I know of the doctor, what the reason might bee, that where hee bringeth in the words of Giraldus Cambrensis touching this place, as an authentick authoritie, hee passeth over that part of his relation, wherein he affirmeth that S. Patrick intended by this means to bring the rude people to a perswasion of the certaintie of the infernall paines of the reprobate, and of the true and everlasting life of the elect after death. (A Discourse of the Religion anciently professed by the Irish and Brittain, p. 21. Lond. 1631, 4to.)

JOHN SELDEN.

(Born 1584; died 1654.)

Neither at all wish I that this of mine should gain any strength of truth from my name alone, but from those authorities which I have designed and brought, both for elder, late, and present times, out of such both printed and manuscript annals, histories, councils, chartularies, laws, lawyers, and records only as were to be used in the most accurate way of search that might furnish for the subject; yet also I have not neglected the able judgments of such of the

learned of later time, as give light to former ages, but I so prefer'd the choicest and most able, that I have wholly abstain'd from any mention or use here of those many ignorants that (while they write) rather instruct us in their own wants of ability, than direct to any thing that may satisfie. If through ignorance I have omitted any thing in the History or the Review, that deserved place in them, who ever shall admonish me of it shall have a most willing acknowledgment of his learning and courtesie. But all the bad titles that are ever due to abuse of the holiest obtestation, be always my companions if I have purposely omitted any good authority of ancient or late time, that I saw necessary, or could think might give further or other light to any position or part of it: for I sought only truth, and was never so far engag'd in this or ought else as to torture my brains or venture my credit to make or create premisses for a chosen conclusion, that I rather would than could prove. My premisses made what conclusions or conjectures I have, and were not bred by them. And although both of them here not a little sometimes vary from what is vulgarly receiv'd, yet that happen'd not at all from any desire to differ from common opinion, but from another course of disquisition that is commonly used; that is, by examination of the truth of those suppositions which patient idleness too easily takes for clear and granted. For the old scepticks, that never would profess that they had found a truth, shew'd yet the best way to search for any, when they doubted aswell of what those of the dogmatical sects too credulously receiv'd for infallible principles, as they did of the

newest conclusions: they were indeed questionless too nice, and deceiv'd themselves with the nimbleness of their own sophisms, that permitted no kind of established truth. But plainly, he that avoids, their disputing levity, yet, being able, takes to himself their liberty of enquiry, is the only way that in all kinds of studies leads and lies open even to the sanctuary of truth, while others, that are servile to common opinion and vulgar suppositions, can rarely hope to be admitted nearer than into the base court of her temple, which too speciously often counterfeits her inmost sanctuary. (*The History of Tythes*, p. xi. [Lond.] 1618, 4to.)

JOHN HALES.

(Born 1584; died 1656.)

Heresie and schism, as they are commonly used, are two theological scar-crows, with which they who use to uphold a party in religion, use to fright away such, as making inquiry into it, are ready to relinquish and oppose it, if it appear either erroneous or suspicious: for, as Plutarch reports of a painter, who having unskillfully painted a cock, chased away all cocks and hens, that so the imperfection of his art might not appear by comparison with nature; so men willing for ends to admit of no fancy but their own, endeavour to hinder an inquiry into it by way of comparison of somewhat with it, peradventure truer, that so the deformity of their own might not appear: but howsoever, in the common manage, heresie and schisme are but ridiculous terms, yet the



things in themselves are of very considerable moment, the one offending against truth, the other against charity, and therefore both deadly, when they are not by imputation, but indeed.

It is then a matter of no small importance, truly to descry the nature of them; and they on the contrary strengthen themselves, who through the iniquity of men and times, are injuriously charged with them.

Schisme (for of heresie we shall not now treat, except it be by accident, and that by occasion of a general mistake, spread through all the writings of the ancients, in which their names are familiarly confounded) schisme, I say, upon the very sound of the word, imports division; division is not but where communion is, or ought to be: now communion is the strength and ground of all society, whether sacred or civil; whosoever therefore they be that offend against the common society and friendliness of men, if it be in civil occasions, are guilty of sedition and rebellion; if it be by reason of ecclesiastical difference, they are guilty of schisme; so that schisme is an ecclesiastical sedition, as sedition is a lay schism: yet the great benefits of communion notwithstanding, in regard of divers distempers men are subject to, dissention and dis-union are often necessary; for when either false or uncertain conclusions are obtruded for truth, and acts either unlawful, or ministering just scruple, are required of us to be perform'd, in these cases consent were conspiracy, and open contestation is not faction or schisme, but due Christian animosity. \* \* \*

Come we then to consider a little of the second



sort of schisme, arising upon occasion of variety of opinion. It hath been the common disease of Christians from the beginning, not to content themselves with that measure of faith which God and Scriptures have expressly afforded us, but out of a vain desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to devise things, of which we have no light, neither from reason nor revelation; neither have they rested here, but upon pretence of church-authority (which is none) or tradition (which for the most part is but feigned) they have peremptorily concluded, and confidently imposed upon others, a necessity of entertaining conclusions of that nature; and, to strengthen themselves, have broken out into divisions and factions, opposing man to man, synod to synod, till the peace of the church vanished, without all possibility of recall: hence arose those ancient and many separations amongst Christians, occasioned by Arianisme, Eutychianisme, Nestorianisme, Photinianisme, Sabellianisme, and many more, both ancient and in our own time: all which indeed are but names of schisme, howsoever in the common language of the fathers they were called heresies; for heresie is an act of the will, not of the reason, and is indeed a lye, and not a mistake. \* \* \*

To charge churches and liturgies with things unnecessary, was the first beginning of all superstition, and when scruple of conscience began to be made or pretended, there schism began to break in: if the special guides and fathers of the church would be a little sparing of incumbring churches with superfluities, or not over-rigid either in reviving obsolete customs, or imposing new, there would be far less cause

of schism or superstition, and all the inconvenience were likely to ensue would be but this, they should in so doing yield a little to the imbecillity of their inferiours, a thing which St. Paul would never have refused to do; mean while wheresoever false or suspected opinions are made a piece of church-liturgy, he that separates is not the schismatick; for it is alike unlawful to make profession of known or suspected falsehood, as to put in practice unlawful or suspected actions. (A Tract concerning Schisme and Schismatics: Golden Remains of the ever memorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton College, 2d edit. Lond. 1673, 4to.)\*

#### WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

(Born 1585; died 1649.)

I beganne to turne ouer in my remembrance all that could afflict miserable mortalitie, and to fore-cast

\* Of the works of this distinguished man, a collective edition was published by Lord Hailes, who has however taken liberties with the text which would now be considered as altogether unwarrantable. (Works of the ever memorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton. Glasgow, 1765, 3 vols. 8vo.) He has besides overlooked a posthumous work of the author, entitled "A Discourse of the several Dignities and Corruptions of Man's Nature, since the Fall." Lond. 1720, 8vo. A complete and faithful edition might not be unworthy of the Clarendon press. The life of Hales, written by a very eminent author, may be found in a publication almost unknown in this country, and bearing the following title: "Joannis Halesii Historia Concilii Dordraceni. Jo. Laur. Mosheimius, Theol. D. et P. P. O. ex Anglico sermone Latine vertit, variis observationibus et vita Halesii auxit. Accedit ejusdem de Auctoritate Concilii Dordraceni, Paci sacre noxia, Consultatio." Hamburgi, 1724, 8vo.

euerie accident which could beget gloomie and sad apprehensions, and with a maske of horreur shew it selfe to humane eyes; till in the end, as by vnities and points mathematicians are brought to great numbers and huge greatnesse, after manie fantastickall glances of the woes of mankind, and those encombrances which follow vpon life, I was brought to thinke, and with amazement, on the last of humane terrors, or, as one tearmed it, the last of all dreadfull and terrible euils, Death. For to easie censure it would appeare that the soule, if it can fore-see that diuorcement which it is to haue from the bodie, should not without great reason bee thus ouergriued, and plunged in inconsolable and vn-accustomed sorrow; considering their neare vnion, long familiaritie and loue, with the great change, paine, vglinesse, which are apprehended to bee the inseperable attendants of death.

They had their being together; partes they are of one reasonable creature; the harming of the one is the weakning of the working of the other. What sweete contentments doeth the soule enjoye by the senses! They are the gates and windowes of its knowledge, the organes of its delight. If it bee tideous to an excellent player on the lute to endure but a few monethes the want of one, how much more must the beeing without such noble tooles and engines bee plaintfull to the soule? And if two pilgrimes, which have wandered some little peece of ground together, haue an heartsgriefe when they are neare to parte, what must the sorrow bee at the parting of two so louing friendes and neuer-loathing louers as are the bodie and the soule?



Death is the sade estranger of acquaintance, the eternall diuorcer of mariage, the rauisher of the children from their parentes, the stealer of parents from the children, the interrer of fame, the sole cause of forgetfulnesse, by which the liuing talke of those gone away as of so manie shadowes, or fabulous paladines. All strength by it is enfeebled, beautie turned in deformitie and rottennesse, honour in contempt, glorie into basenesse: it is the vnreasonable breaker off of all the actions of vertue, by which wee enjoye no more the sweete pleasures on earth, neither contemplate the statelie reuolutions of the heauens; sunne perpetuallie setteth, starres neuer rise vnto vs. It in one moment depriveth vs of what with so great toyle and care in manie yeeres wee haue heaped together: by this are successions of linages cut short, kingdomes left heirelesse, and greatest states orphaned. It is not ouercome by pride, smoothed by gawdie flatterie, tamed by intreaties, bribed by benefites, softened by lamentations, diuerted by time. Wisdom, saue this, can alter and helpe anie thing. By death wee are exiled from this faire citie of the world; it is no more a world vnto vs, nor wee anie more people into it. The ruines of phanes, palaces, and other magnificent frames, yeeld a sad prospect to the soule; and how should it consider the wracke of such a wonderfull maister-piece as is the bodie, without horror?

Though it cannot well and altogether be denied, but that death naturallie is terrible and to bee abhorred, it beeing a priuation of life, and a not beeing, and euerie priuation beeing abhorred of nature, and euill in it selfe, the feare of it too beeing ingenerate



vniversallie in all creatures; yet I haue often thought that euen naturallie, to a minde by onelie nature resolu'd and prepared, it is more terrible in conceits than in veritie, and at the first glance than when well pryed into; and that rather by the weaknesse of our fantasie, than by what is in it; and that the marbled colours of obsequies, weeping, and funerall pompe, with which wee our selues limne it forth, did adde much more gastlinesse vnto it than otherwayes it hath. (A Cypresse Grove, p. 64: subjoined to Flowres of Sion, 2d edit. Edinb. 1630, 4to.)

THOMAS HOBBS.

(Born 1588; died 1679.)

The causes of dreams (if they be natural) are the actions or violence of the inward parts of a man upon his brain, by which the passages of sense, by sleep benumbed, are restored to their motion. The signs by which this appeareth to be so, are the differences of dreams (old men commonly dream oftener, and have their dreams more painful than young) proceeding from the different accidents of man's body; as dreams of lust, as dreams of anger, according as the heart, or other parts within, work more or less upon the brain, by more or less heat; so also the descents of different sorts of flegm maketh us a dream of different tastes of meats and drinks; and I believe there is a reciprocation of motion from the brain to the vital parts, and back from the vital parts to the brain; whereby not only imagination begetteth motion in

those parts, but also motion in those parts begetteth imagination like to that by which it was begotten. If this be true, and that sad imaginations nourish the spleen, then we see also a cause, why a strong spleen reciprocally causeth fearful dreams, and why the effects of lasciviousness may in a dream produce the image of some person that had caused them. Another sign that dreams are caused by the action of the inward parts, is the disorder and casual consequence of one conception or image to another: for when we are waking, the antecedent thought or conception introduceth, and is cause of the consequent (as the water followeth a mans finger upon a dry and level table) but in dreams there is commonly no coherence (and when there is, it is by chance) which must needs proceed from this, that the brain in dreams is not restored to its motion in every part alike; whereby it cometh to pass, that our thoughts appear like the stars between the flying clouds, not in the order [in] which a man would chuse to observe them, but as the uncertain flight of broken clouds permits. (Humane Nature; or the Fundamental Elements of Policy: Tripos, in three Discourses, p. 12; 3d edit. Lond. 1684, 8vo.)

WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH.

(Born 1602; died 1644.)

Points of doctrine (as all other things) are as they are, and not as they are esteemed: neither can a necessarie point bee made unnecessary by being so ac-

counted, nor an unnecessarie point bee made necessarie by being overvalued. But as the ancient philosophers (whose different opinions about the soule of man you may read in Aristotle de Anima, and Cicero's Tusculan Questions) notwithstanding their diverse opinions touching the nature of the soule, yet all of them had soules, and soules of the same nature: or as those physitians who dispute whether the braine or heart be the principall part of man, yet all of them have braines and have hearts, and herein agree sufficiently; so likewise, though some Protestants esteeme that doctrine the soule of the church, which others doe not so highly value, yet this hinders not but that which is indeed the soule of the church may bee in both sorts of them; and though one account that a necessarie truth which others account neither necessarie nor perhaps true, yet this notwithstanding, in those truths which are truly and really necessarie they may all agree. For no argument can be more sophisticated than this: They differ in some points which they esteeme necessarie; therefore they differ in some that indeed and in truth are so.

Now as concerning the other inference, that they cannot agree what points are fundamentall: I have said and prov'd formerly that there is no such necessitie as you imagine or pretend, that men should certainly know what is, and what is not fundamentall. They that beleeve all things plainly delivered in Scripture, beleeve all things fundamentall, and are at sufficient unitie in matters of faith, though they cannot precisely and exactly distinguish between what is fundamentall and what is profitable; nay, though by errorr they mistake some vaine, or perhaps some



hurtfull opinions for necessarie and fundamentall truths. Besides, I have shewed above, that as Protestants do not agree (for you over-reach in saying they cannot) touching what points are fundamentall; so neither do you agree what points are defin'd and so to be accounted, and what are not; nay, nor concerning the subject in which God hath placed this pretended authoritie of defining; some of you setting it in the pope himself, though alone without a councell, others in a councell, though divided from the pope; others only in the conjunction of councell and pope; others not in this neither, but in the acceptance of the present church universall; lastly, others not attributing it to this neither, but only to the perpetuall succession of the church of all ages: of which divided company it is very evident and undeniable, that every former may be and are obliged to hold many things defin'd and therefore necessarie, which the latter, according to their owne grounds, have no obligation to doe, nay, cannot doe so upon any firme and sure and infallible foundation. (The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation, p. 387, 2d edit. Lond. 1638, fol.)

SIR THOMAS BROWNE, M.D.

(Born 1605; died 1632.)

As there were many reformers, so likewise many reformatiōs; every country proceeding in a particular way and method, according as their national interest, together with their constitution and clime, inclined them; some angrily, and with extremity;



others calmly, and with mediocrity, not rending but easily dividing the community, and leaving an honest possibility of reconciliation; which though peaceable spirits do desire, and may conceive that revolution of time, and the mercies of God may effect, yet that judgment that shall consider the present antipathies between the two extremes, their contrarieties in condition, affection, and opinion, may with the same hopes expect an union in the poles of heaven. \* \* \*

I could never divide my self from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that, from which within a few days I should dissent my self. I have no genius to disputes in religion, and have often thought it wisdom to decline them, especially upon a disadvantage, or when the cause of truth might suffer in the weakness of my patronage: where we desire to be informed, 'tis good to contest with men above our selves; but to confirm and establish our opinions, 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own, that the frequent spoils and victories over their reasons may settle in our selves an esteem and confirmed opinion of our own. Every man is not a proper champion for truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity: many, from the ignorance of these maxims, and an inconsiderate zeal unto truth, have too rashly charged the troops of error, and remain as trophies unto the enemies of truth: a man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender; 'tis therefore far better to enjoy her with peace, than to hazard her on a battle. (*Religio Medici*, p. 7, 10. edit. Lond. 1682, 8vo.)

## EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON.

(Born 1608; died 1673.)

But I must here take leave a little longer to discontinue this narration: and if the celebrating the memory of eminent and extraordinary persons, and transmitting their great virtues, for the imitation of posterity, be one of the principal ends and duties of history, it will not be thought impertinent, in this place, to remember a loss which no time will suffer to be forgotten, and no success or good fortune could repair. In this unhappy battle was slain the Lord Viscount Falkland; a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war, than that single loss, it must be most infamous, and execrable to all posterity. \* \* \*

He was a great cherisher of wit, and fancy, and good parts, in any man; and, if he found them clouded with poverty or want, a most liberal and bountiful patron towards them, even above his fortune; of which, in those administrations, he was such a dispenser, as if he had been trusted with it to such uses, and if there had been the least of vice in his expence, he might have been thought too prodigal. He was constant and pertinacious in whatsoever he resolv'd to do, and not to be wearied by any pains that were necessary to that end. And therefore having once resolv'd not to see London, which he

loved above all places, till he had perfectly learned the Greek tongue, he went to his own house in the country, and pursued it with that indefatigable industry, that it will not be believ'd in how short a time he was master of it, and accurately read all the Greek historians.

In this time, his house being within little more than ten miles of Oxford, he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polite and accurate men of that university; who found such an immensity of wit, and such a solidity of judgement in him, so infinite a fancy, bound in him by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge, that he was not ignorant of any thing, yet such an excessive humility, as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted, and dwelt with him, as in a college situated in a purer air; so that his house was a university in a less volume; whither they came not so much for repose as study, and to examine and refine those grosser propositions, which laziness and consent made current in vulgar conversation. (The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, begun in the year 1641, vol. ii. p. 270. Oxford, 1704-7, 3 vols. fol.)

JOHN MILTON.

(Born 1608; died 1674.)

When a city shall be as it were besieg'd and blockt about, her navigable river infested, inrodes and incursions round, defiance and battell oft rumo'd to be marching up ev'n to her walls, and



suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more then at other times, wholly tak'n up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reform'd, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, ev'n to a rarity and admiration, things not before discours'd or writt'n of, argues first a singular good will, contentednesse, and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives it self to a gallant bravery, and well ground-ed contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was who, when Rome was nigh besieg'd by Hanibal, being in the city, bought that peece of ground, at no cheap rate, whereon Hanibal himself encamp't his own regiment. Next it is a lively and cherfull presage of our happy successe and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rationall faculties, and those in the acutest and the pertest operations of wit and sottlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is; so when the cherfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversie and new invention, it betok'ns us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatall decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption, to outlive these pangs, and wax young again, entring the glorious waies of truth and prosperous vertue, destin'd to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation



rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undaz'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms. (Areopagitica; a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of vnlicenc'd Printing, to the Parliament of England, p. 33. Lond. 1644, 4to.)

SIR MATTHEW HALE, CHIEF JUSTICE.

(Born 1609; died 1676.)

I come now to that other branch of our laws, the common municipal law of this kingdom, which has the superintendency of all those other particular laws used in the before-mentioned courts, and is the common rule for the administration of common justice in this great kingdom; of which it has been always tender, and there is great reason for it; for it is not only a very just and excellent law, in it self, but it is singularly accommodated to the frame of the English government, and to the disposition of the English nation, and such as by a long experience and use it as it were incorporated into their very temperament, and, in a manner, become the complection and constitution of the English commonwealth. Insomuch, that even as in the natural

body the due temperament and constitution, 'do' by degrees work out those accidental diseases which sometimes happen, and do reduce the body to its just state and constitution; so when at any time through the errors, distempers, or iniquities of men or times, the peace of the kingdom, and right order of government, have received interruption, the common law has wasted and wrought out those distempers, and reduced the kingdom to its just state and temperament, as our present (and former) times can easily witness.

This law is that which asserts, maintains, and with all imaginable care provides for the safety of the king's royal person, his crown and dignity, and all his just rights, revenues, powers, prerogatives, and government, as the great foundation (under God) of the peace, happiness, honour, and justice, of this kingdom; and this law is also that which declares and asserts the rights and liberties, and the properties of the subject; and is the just, known, and common rule of justice and right between man and man, within this kingdom. (The History of the Common Law of England, p. 44. 2d edit. Lond. 1716, 8vo.)

JEREMY TAYLOR, BISHOP OF DOWN.

(Born 1613; died 1667.)

As for the duty of particular men in the question of communicating with churches of different persuasions, it is to be regulated according to the laws of

those churches; for if they require no impiety, or any thing unlawful as the condition of their communion, then they communicate with them as they are servants of Christ, as disciples of his doctrine, and subjects to his laws, and the particular distinguishing doctrine of his sect hath no influence or communication with him who from another sect is willing to communicate with all the servants of their common Lord: for since no church of one name is infallible, a wise man may have either the misfortune or a reason to believe of every one in particular, that she errs in some article or other: either he cannot communicate with any, or else he may communicate with all, that do not make a sin or the profession of an error to be the condition of their communion. And therefore, as every particular church is bound to tolerate disagreeing persons in the senses and for the reasons above explicated; so every particular person is bound to tolerate her, that is, not to refuse her communion when he may have it upon innocent conditions: for what is it to me if the Greek church denies procession of the third person from the second, so she will give me the right hand of fellowship (though I affirm it) therefore because I profess the religion of Jesus Christ, and retain all matters of faith and necessity? But this thing will scarce be reduced to practice; for few churches that have framed bodies of confession and articles, will endure any person that is not of the same confession; which is a plain demonstration that such bodies of confession and articles do much hurt, by becoming instruments of separating and dividing communions, and making unnecessary or uncertain propositions a



certain means of schism and disunion : but then men would do well to consider whether or no such proceedings do not derive the guilt of schism upon them who least think it, and whether of the two is the schismatick, he that makes unnecessary and (supposing the state of things) inconvenient impositions, or he that disobeys them, because he cannot without doing violence to his conscience believe them ; he that parts communion, because without sin he could not entertain it, or they that have made it necessary for him to separate, by requiring such conditions which to [no] man are simply necessary, and to his particular are either sinful or impossible. (*Θεολογία ἐκλεκτική*. A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, shewing the unreasonableness of prescribing to other mens Faith, and the iniquity of persecuting differing Opinions, p. 356. 2d edit. Lond. 1702, 8vo.)

ROBERT LEIGHTON, ARCHBISHOP OF GLASGOW.

(Born 1613 ; died 1684.)

All men agree in this, that they would willingly meet with some satisfying good ; and yet if you look right upon the projects and labours of the greatest part, [you] shall find them flying from it, and taking much pains to be miserable. And truly considering the darkness that's upon the soul of man, 'tis no great wonder to see these miss their way, and continue wandring, that hear not the voice of the gospel to recal them, and see not its light to direct them. But this is somewhat strange, that where



true happiness, and the true way to it is propounded and set before men, so few should follow it in good earnest. If the excellency of that good did not allure them, yet one would think that their many disappointments in all other things should drive them home to it. How often do we run our selves out of breath after shadows, and when we think we have overtaken them, and would lay hold on them, we find nothing; and yet still we love to befool our selves, even against our own experience, which, we say, uses to make fools wiser; still we chuse rather to shift from one vanity to another, than to return to that sovereign good that alone can fill the vastest desires of our souls; rather to run from one broken cistern to another, as the prophet calls them, yea and to take pains to hew them out, than have recourse to that fountain of living waters. (Sermons, p. 119. Lond. 1692, 8vo.)

JOHN WILKINS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

(Born 1614; died 1672.)

Though the understanding have naturally this power belonging to it, of apprehending, and comparing, and judging of things, yet is it not to be expected, either from infants, or from dull sottish people, or from such as are destitute of all the advantages of education, that they should improve this natural ability to all the due consequences of it. But in order to this, 'tis necessary that men should first be out of their non-age before they can attain to an actual use of this principle; and withal, that they

should be ready to exert and exercise their faculties to observe and consider the nature of things, to make use of that help which is to be had, by the instruction and experience of those with whom they converse. Nor can this be any just exception against the naturalness of such notions, that they are promoted by the experience and instruction of others; because mankind is naturally designed for a sociable life, and to be helpful to one another by mutual conversation. And without this advantage of discourse and conversation, whereby they communicate their thoughts and opinions to one another, it could not otherwise be, but that men must needs be strangely ignorant, and have many wild and gross apprehensions of such things as are in themselves very plain and obvious, and do appear so to others.

For the better understanding of this, let us suppose a person bred up in some deep cavern of the earth, without any instruction from others, concerning the state of things in this upper surface of the world: suppose this person, after he is arrived to a mature age, to be fetched up from this solitary abode, to behold this habitable world, the fields, and towns, and seas, and rivers, the various revolutions of seasons, together with the beautiful host of heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars; it could not otherwise be, but that such a person must at first view have many wild imaginations of things. He might conceive those useful and beautiful contrivances of houses and towns, to spring up and grow out of the earth, as well as trees; or else that trees were made and built by men, as well as houses. But supposing him to be a man, he must be endowed with

such a natural faculty, as upon farther consideration and experience will quickly satisfie him, that one of these was natural and the other artificial; and that the buildings were framed to that elegance and convenience by the art and skill of men. (Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion, p. 58, 5th edit. Lond. 1704, 8vo.)

RICHARD BAXTER.

(Born 1615; died 1691.)

How quick and piercing is the word in itself! yet many times it never enters, being managed by a feeble arm. Oh, what weight and worth is there in every passage of the blessed gospel! enough, one would think, to enter and force the dullest soul, and wholly possess its thoughts and affections: and yet how oft doth it fall as water upon a stone; and how easily can our hearts sleep out a sermon time; and much because these words of life do die in the delivery, and the fruit of our conception is almost still-born! Our people's spirits remain congealed, while we who are intrusted with the word that should melt them, do suffer it to freeze between our lips. We speak indeed of soul-concerning truths, and set before them life and death; but it is with such self-seeking affectation, and in such a lazy, formal, customary strain, like the pace the Spaniard rides, that the people little think we are in good sadness, or that our hearts do mean as our tongues do speak. I have heard of some tongues that can lick a coal of fire till it be cold. I fear these tongues are in most



of our mouths, and that the breath that is given us to blow up this fire, till it flame in our people's souls, is rather used to blow it out. Such preaching is it that hath brought the most to hear sermons, as they say their creed and *Pater-nosters*, even as a few good words of course. How many a cold and mean sermon that yet contains most precious truths! The things of God which we handle are divine, but our manner of handling too human; and there is little or none that ever we touch, but we leave the print of our fingers behind us; but if God should speak this word himself, it would be a piercing, melting word indeed. How full of comfort are the gospel promises! yet do we oft so heartlessly declare them, that the broken, bleeding-hearted saints, are much debarred of their joys. Christ is indeed a precious pearl, but oft held forth in leprous hands: and thus do we disgrace the riches of the gospel, when it is the work of our calling to make it honourable in the eyes of men; and we dim the glory of that jewel by our dull and low expressions, and dunghill conversations, whose lustre we do pretend to discover, while the hearers judge of it by our expressions, and not by its genuine proper worth. The truth is, the best of men do apprehend but little of what God in his word expresseth, and what they do apprehend they are unable to utter. Human language is not so copious as the heart's conceivings are; and what we possibly might declare, yet through our own unbelief, stupidity, laziness, and other corruptions, we usually fail in; and what we do declare, yet the darkness of our people's understandings, and the sad senselessness of their hearts, do usually shut out and



make void. So that as all the works of God are perfect in their season, as he is perfect, so are all the works of man, as himself, imperfect; and those which God performeth by the hand of man, will too much savour of the instrument. (The Saint's everlasting Rest, part i. chap. vii. Practical Works, vol. xxii. p. 125. Lond. 1830, 23 vols. 8vo.)

RALPH CUDWORTH, D.D.

(Born 1617; died 1688.)

If we would speak yet more accurately and precisely, we might rather say that no positive commands whatsoever do make any thing morally good and evil, just and unjust, which nature had not made such before. For indifferent things commanded, considered materially in themselves, remain still what they were before in their own nature, that is, indifferent, because, as Aristotle speaks, will cannot change nature. And those things that are by nature indifferent, must needs be as immutably so, as those things that are by nature just or unjust, honest or shameful. But all the moral goodness, justice, and virtue that is exercised in obeying positive commands, and doing such things as are positive only, and to be done for no other cause but because they are commanded, or in respect to political order, consisteth not in the materiality of the actions themselves, but in that formality of yielding obedience to the commands of lawful authority in them. Just as when a man covenanteth or promiseth to do an indifferent thing which by natural justice he was not

bound to do, the virtue of doing it consisteth not in the materiality of the action promised, but in the formality of keeping faith and performing covenants. Wherefore in positive commands, the will of the commander doth not create any new moral entity, but only diversely modifies and determines that general duty or obligation of natural justice to obey lawful authority and keep oaths and covenants, as our own will in promising doth but produce several modifications of keeping faith. And therefore there are no new things just or due made by either of them, besides what are alway by nature such, to keep our own promises, and obey the lawful commands of others. (A Treatise concerning eternal and immutable Morality, p. 24. Lond. 1731, 8vo.)

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

(Born 1618 ; died 1667.)

The first minister of state has not so much business in publick, as a wise man has in private : if the one have little leisure to be alone, the one has less leisure to be in company ; the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and nature under his consideration. There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, that a man does not know how to pass his time. 'Twould have been but ill spoken by Methusalem in the nine hundred sixty ninth year of his life ; so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain to the utmost perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced

to be idle for want of work. But this, you'll say, is work only for the learned; others are not capable either of the employments, or divertisements, that arrive from letters. I know they are not; and therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man totally illiterate. But if any man be so unlearned as to want entertainment of the little intervals of accidental solitude, which frequently occur in almost all conditions (except the very meanest of the people, who have business enough in the necessary provisions for life) it is truly a great shame both to his parents and himself; for a very small portion of any ingenious art will stop up all those gaps of our time; either musick, or painting, or designing, or chymistry, or history, or gardening, or twenty other things will do it usefully and pleasantly; and if he happen to set his affections upon poetry (which I do not advise him to immoderately) that will overdo it; no wood will be thick enough to hide him from the importunities of company or business, which would abstract him from his beloved. (Several Discourses by way of Essays, in verse and prose, p. 84. Works, 9th edit. Lond. 1700, fol.)

ALGERNON SIDNEY.

(Born about 1622; died 1683.)

If any man ask, how nations come to have the power of doing these things, I answer that liberty being only an exemption from the dominion of another, the question ought not to be, how a nation can come to be free, but how a man comes to have



a dominion over it; for till the right of dominion be proved and justified, liberty subsists, as arising from the nature and being of a man. Tertullian, speaking of the emperors, says, "ab eo imperium a quo spiritus;" and we, taking man in his first condition, may justly say, "ab eo libertas, a quo spiritus;" for no man can owe more than he has received. The creature having nothing, and being nothing but what the Creator makes him, must owe all to him, and nothing to any one from whom he has received nothing. Man therefore must be naturally free, unless he be created by another power than we have yet heard of. The obedience due to parents arises from hence, that they are the instruments of our generation; and we are instructed by the light of reason that we ought to make great returns to those from whom under God we have received all. When they die, we are their heirs, we enjoy the same rights, and devolve the same to our posterity. God only, who confers this right upon us, can deprive us of it: and we can no-way understand that he does so, unless he had so declared by express revelation, or had set some distinguishing marks of dominion and subjection upon men; and, as an ingenious person not long since said, caused some to be born with crowns upon their heads, and all others with saddles upon their backs. This liberty therefore must continue till it be either forfeited, or willingly resigned. The forfeiture is hardly comprehensible in a multitude, that is not entered into any society; for as they are all equal, and equals can have no right over each other, no man can forfeit any thing to one, who can justly demand nothing, unless it may be by a personal in-



jury, which is nothing to this case; because where there is no society, one man is not bound by the actions of another. All cannot join in the same act, because they are joined in none; or if they should, no man could recover, much less transmit the forfeiture; and not being transmitted, it perishes as if it had never been, and no man can claim any thing from it. (Discourses concerning Government, p. 406, 3d edit. Lond. 1751, fol.)

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE, BART.

(Born 1628; died 1700.)

The safety and firmness of any frame of government may be best judged by the rules of architecture, which teach us that the pyramid is of all figures the firmest, and least subject to be shaken or overthrown by any concussions or accidents from the earth or air; and it grows still so much the firmer, by how much broader the bottom and sharper the top.

The ground upon which all government stands, is the consent of the people, or the greatest or strongest part of them; whether this proceed from reflections upon what is past, by the reverence of an authority under which they and their ancestors have for many ages been born and bred; or from sense of what is present, by the ease, plenty, and safety they enjoy; or from opinions of what is to come, by the fear they have from the present government, or hopes from another. Now that government which by any of these, or all these ways, takes in the consent of

the greatest number of the people, and consequently their desires and resolutions to support it, may justly be said to have the broadest bottom, and to stand upon the largest compass of ground; and, if it terminate in the authority of one single person, it may likewise be said to have the narrowest top, and so to make the figure of the firmest sort of pyramid.

On the contrary, a government which by alienating the affections, losing the opinions, and crossing the interests of the people, leaves out of its compass the greatest part of their consent, may justly be said, in the same degrees it thus loses ground, to narrow its bottom; and if this be done to serve the ambition, humour the passion, satisfy the appetites, or advance the power and interests not only of one man, but of two, or more, or many that come to share in the government; by this means the top may be justly said to grow broader, as the bottom narrower by the other. Now by the same degrees that either of these happen, the stability of the figure is by the same lessened and impaired; so as at certain degrees it begins to grow subject to accidents of wind and of weather; and at certain others, it is sure to fall of it self, or by the least shake that happens, to the ground. (An Essay upon the Original and Nature of Government: Works, vol. i. p. 105, edit. Lond. 1720, 2 vols. fol.)

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

(Born 1630; died 1677.)

That distinction which thou standest upon, and

which seemeth so vast between thy poor neighbour and thee, what is it? Whence did it come? Whither tends it? It is not any-wise natural, or according to primitive design: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, so were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all constituted in a most prosperous and plentiful estate; all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all, every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things (together with sicknesses and pain, together with all other infelicities and inconveniencies) were the by-blows of our fall; sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendred so much strife among men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were (I say) brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so charitable as we should be, they could hardly subsist, especially in that measure they do. God indeed (for promoting some good ends, and for prevention of some mischiefs, apt to spring from our ill-nature in this our lapsed state; particularly to prevent the strife and disorder which scrambling would cause among men, presuming on equal right, and parity of force) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoyns us a contented submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that



all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein. No, every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence. God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extreme want; but hath assigned to every one a child's portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect. No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to destroy superfluously what another man apparently wants, but is obliged to impart it to him: so that rich men are indeed but the treasurers, the stewards, the caterers of God for the rest of men, having a strict charge to "dispense unto every one his meat in due season," and no just privilege to withhold it from any: the honour of distribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reserved to the poor, as a provision for their necessity. (Works, vol. i. p. 319, edit. Lond. 1716, 3 vols. fol.)

JOHN TILLOTSON, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

(Born 1630; died 1694.)

Amongst too many other instances of the great corruption and degeneracy of the age wherein we live, the great and general want of sincerity in conversation is none of the least. The world is grown so full of dissimulation and compliment, that mens words are hardly any signification of their thoughts; and if any man measure his words by his heart, and



speak as he thinks, and do not express more kindness to every man, than men usually have for any man, he can hardly escape the censure of rudeness and want of breeding. The old English plainness and sincerity, that generous integrity of nature and honesty of disposition, which always argues true greatness of mind, and is usually accompanied with undaunted courage and resolution, is in a great measure lost among us; there hath been a long endeavour to transform us into foreign manners and fashions, and to bring us to servile imitation of none of the best of our neighbours, in some of the worst of their qualities. The dialect of conversation is now-a-days so swell'd with vanity and compliment, and so surfeited (as I may say) with expressions of kindness and respect, that if a man that lived an age or two ago should return into the world again, he would really want a dictionary to help him to understand his own language, and to know the true intrinsic value of the phrase in fashion, and would hardly at first believe at what a low rate the highest strains and expressions of kindness imaginable do commonly pass in current payment; and when he should come to understand it, it would be a great while before he could bring himself, with a good countenance and a good conscience, to converse with men upon equal terms, and in their own way.

And in truth it is hard to say whether it should more provoke our contempt or our pity, to hear what solemn expressions of respect and kindness will pass between men, almost upon no occasion; how great honour and esteem they will declare for one whom perhaps they never heard of or saw before, and how

entirely they are all on the sudden devoted to his service and interest, for no reason; how infinitely and eternally obliged to him for no benefit, and how extremely they will be concerned for him, yea, and afflicted too, for no cause. I know it is said, in justification of this hollow kind of conversation, that there is no harm, no real deceit in compliment, but the matter is well enough, so long as we understand one another; *et verba valent ut nummi*, "words are like money;" and when the current value of them is generally understood, no man is cheated by them. This is something, if such words were any thing; but being brought into the account, they are meer cyphers. However, it is still a just matter of complaint, that sincerity and plainness are out of fashion, and that our language is running into a lye; that men have almost quite perverted the use of speech, and made words to signify nothing; that the greatest part of the conversation of mankind, and of their intercourse with one another, is little else but driving a trade of dissimulation; insomuch that it would make a man heartily sick and weary of the world to see the little sincerity that is in use and practice among men. (Sermons on several subjects and occasions, vol. iv. p. 802, edit. Lond. 1742-4, 12 vols. 8vo.)

JOHN SPENCER, D.D.

(Born 1630; died 1695.)

It is the nature of all knowledg to give a kind of strength and presence of mind to a man, but espe-

cially of philosophy. This will secure us, as from the rocks of atheism, because leading us into a notice of some first cause, into which all the second do gradually ascend and finally resolve; so also from the shelves of superstition, because acquainting us with the second causes. For fancy is apt to suggest very monstrous notions of those things of whose causes and natures we are unresolved; all which fly, like the shadows of the twilight, before the approaching beams of knowledg. Philosophy leads us, as men do horses, close up to things we start at, and gives us a distinct view of what frightened us before, and so shames the weakness of our former fears. He that knows what slow conquests a flame makes upon any humid viscous matter, will not easily account every gentle fire, continuing for some time in the air, a kind of flaming sword, miraculously appointed by God to drive the secure world out of its fool's paradise. Who so considers how possible it is for springs sometimes to fail (nay how wonderful it is that they fail no oftner) cannot readily receive any breaches in the streams which hold of them, as the presages of some civil breaches in a state. Besides, philosophy informs us of the methods of nature, in reserving immutability to the more retired parts of heaven and earth, but banishing the great instances of variation to the superior parts of earth, and inferior of heaven. Accordingly, to the earth-quakes, eruptions of strange fires, new fountains, preternatural generations (in all which the more central parts of this vast globe are not at all touched and concerned) there correspond in the superficial parts of heaven mighty thunders, comets, new stars appear-



ing now and then, alteration in the figures of the planets, variety of new spots observed to rise and set in the body of the sun, some, though rarer, failings of its usual splendor. (A Discourse concerning Prodigies, wherein the Vanity of Presages by them is comprehended, and their true and proper Ends asserted and vindicated, p. 294, edit. Lond. 1665, 8vo.)

## JOHN DRYDEN.

(Born 1631; died 1700.)

To begin then with Shakespeare: he was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learn'd; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he look'd inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him. \* \* \*

As for Johnson, to whose character I am now arriv'd, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages) I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theater



ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He manag'd his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent mechanick people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latine, and he borrow'd boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in Sejanus and Catiline. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weav'd it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: perhaps too he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latine as he found them; wherein though he learnedly followed their language,

he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatick poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. (Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay, p. 33. Lond. 1684, 4to.)

## JOHN LOCKE.

(Born 1632; died 1704.)

That you may another time be a little better informed what party I write for, I will tell you. They are those who in every nation fear God, work righteousness, and are accepted with him; and not those who in every nation are zealous for human constitutions, cry up nothing so much as outward conformity to the national religion, and are accepted by those who are the promoters of it. Those that I write for are those who, according to the light of their own consciences, are every where in earnest in matters of their own salvation, without any desire to impose on others; a party so seldom favoured by any of the powers or sects of the world; a party that has so few preferments to bestow, so few benefices to reward the indeavour of any one who appears for it, that I conclude I shall easily be believed when I say, that neither hopes of preferment, nor a design to recommend myself to those I live amongst, has biased my understanding, or misled me in my undertaking. So much truth as serves the turn of any particular

church, and can be accommodated to the narrow interest of some human constitution, is indeed often received with applause, and the publisher finds his account in it. But I think I may say, truth, in its full latitude of those generous principles of the gospel, which so much recommend and inculcate universal charity, and a freedom from the inventions and impositions of men in the things of God, has so seldom had a fair and favourable hearing any where, that he must be very ignorant of the history and nature of man, however dignified and distinguished, who proposes to himself any secular advantage by writing for her at that rate. (Letters concerning Toleration, p. 378, edit. Lond. 1765, 4to.)

GILBERT BURNET, BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

(Born 1643; died 1715.)

I have seen the nation thrice on the brink of ruin, by men thus tainted. After the Restoration, all were running fast into slavery; had King Charles the Second been attentive to those bad designs (which he pursued afterwards with more caution) upon his first return, slavery and absolute power might then have been settled into a law, with a revenue able to maintain it: he plaid away that game without thought, and he had then honest ministers, who would not serve him in it; after all that he did, during the course of his reign, it was scarce credible, that the same temper should have returned in his time; yet he recovered it in the last four years of his reign; and the gentry of England were as active and zealous



to throw up all their liberties, as their ancestors ever had been to preserve them. This continued about half a year in his brother's reign; and he depended so much upon it, that he thought it could never go out of his hands: but he, or rather his priests, had the skill and dexterity to play this game likewise away, and lose it a second time; so that, at the Revolution, all seemed to come again into their wits. But men who have no principles, cannot be steady; now the greater part of the capital gentry seem to return again to a love of tyranny, provided they be the under-tyrants themselves; and they seem to be even uneasy with a court, when it will not be as much a court as they would have it. This is a folly of so particular a nature, that really it wants a name: it is natural for poor men, who have little to lose, and much to hope for, to become the instruments of slavery; but it is an extravagance peculiar to our age, to see rich men grow as it were in love with slavery and arbitrary power. The root of all this is, that our gentry are not betimes possessed with a true measure of solid knowledge and sound religion, with a love to their country, a hatred of tyranny, and a zeal for liberty. Plutarch's Lives, with the Greek and Roman history, ought to be early put in their hands; they ought to be well acquainted with all history, more particularly that of our own nation, which they should not read in abridgments, but in the fullest and most copious collectors of it, that they may see to the bottom, what is our constitution, and what are our laws, what are the methods bad princes have taken to enslave us, and by what conduct we have been preserved: gentlemen ought to observe these things,



and to entertain one another often upon these subjects, to raise in themselves, and to spread around them to all others, a noble ardour for law and liberty. (History of his own Time, vol. ii. p. 649. Lond. 1724-34, 2 vols. fol.)

JOHN ARBUTHNOT, M. D.

(Died 1735.)

If we consider, to what perfection we now know the courses, periods, order, distances, and proportions of the several great bodies of the universe, at least such as fall within our view; we shall have cause to admire the sagacity and industry of the mathematicians, and the power of numbers and geometry well apply'd. Let us cast our eyes backward, and consider astronomy in its infancy, or rather let us suppose it still to begin: for instance, a colony of rude country people, transplanted into an island remote from the commerce of all mankind, without so much as the knowledge of the kalendar, and the periods of the seasons, without instruments to make observations, or any the least notion of observations or instruments. When is it we could expect any of their posterity should arrive at the art of predicting an eclipse; not only so, but the art of reckoning all eclipses that are past or to come, for any number of years? When is it we could suppose, that one of those islanders, transported to any other place of the earth, should be able by the inspection of the heavens to find how much he were south or north, east or west of his own island, and

to conduct his ship back thither? For my part, tho' I know this may be, and is daily done, but what is known in astronomy, yet when I consider the vast industry, sagacity, multitude of observations, and other extrinsick things necessary for such a sublime piece of knowledge, I should be apt to pronounce it impossible, and never to be hoped for. Now we are let so much into the knowledge of the machine of the universe, and motion of its parts by the rules of this science, perhaps the invention may seem easy. But when we reflect, what penetration and contrivance were necessary to lay the foundations of so great and extensive an art, we cannot but admire its first inventors. (An Essay on the Usefulness of Mathematical Learning, p. 10. Oxford, 1701, 8vo.)

JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D.

(Born 1667; died 1745.)

Whoever hath an ambition to be heard in a crowd, must press, and squeeze, and thrust, and climb with indefatigable pains till he has exalted himself to a certain degree of altitude above them. Now, in all assemblies, tho' you wedge them never so close, we may observe this peculiar property, that over their heads there is room enough; but how to reach it, is the difficult point. --- To this end, the philosopher's way in all ages has been by erecting certain edifices in the air: but, whatever practice and reputation these kind of structures have formerly possessed, or may still continue in; not excepting even that of So-

crates, when he was suspended in a basket to help contemplation; I think, with due submission, they seem to labor under two inconveniences. First, that the foundations being laid too high, they have been often out of sight, and ever out of hearing. Secondly, that the materials being very transitory, have suffered much from inclemences of air, especially in these north-west regions.

Therefore, towards the just performance of this great work, there remain but three methods that I can think on; whereof the wisdom of our ancestors being highly sensible, has, to encourage all aspiring adventurers, thought fit to erect three wooden machines, for the use of those orators who desire to talk much without interruption. These are the pulpit, the ladder, and the stage-itinerant. For, as to the bar, tho' it be compounded of the same matter, and designed for the same use, it cannot however be well allowed the honor of a fourth, by reason of its level or inferior situation, exposing it to perpetual interruption from collaterals. Neither can the bench itself, tho' raised to a proper eminency, put in a better claim, whatever its advocats insist on. For if they please to look into the original design of its erection, and the circumstances or adjuncts subservient to that design, they will soon acknowledge the present practice exactly correspondent to the primitive institution, and both to answer the etymology of the name, which in the Phoenician tongue is a word of great signification, importing, if literally interpreted, "the place of sleep;" but in common acceptation, "a seat well bolster'd and cushion'd, for the repose of old and gouty limbs: *senes ut in otia tuta*



*recedant.*" Fortune being indebted to them this part of retaliation, that, as formerly they have long talkt whilst others slept, so now they may sleep as long whilst others talk. (A Tale of a Tub, written for the universal Improvement of Mankind, p. 33, 3d edit. Lond. 1704, 8vo.)

ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

(Born 1671 ; died 1713.)

There is a certain temper plac'd often in opposition to those eager and aspiring aims of which we have been speaking. Not that it really excludes either the passion of covetousness or ambition, but because it hinders their effects, and keeps them from breaking into open action. 'Tis this passion which, by soothing the mind, and softning it into an excessive love of rest and indolence, renders high attempts impracticable, and represents as insuperable the difficultys of a painful and laborious course towards wealth and honours. Now tho an inclination to ease, and a love of moderate recess and rest from action, be as natural and useful to us as the inclination we have towards sleep, yet an excessive love of rest, and a contracted aversion to action and imployment, must be a disease in the mind equal to that of a lethargy in the body.

How much action and exercise are necessary for the body, let it be judg'd by the difference we find in the constitutions that are accustom'd, and those that are wholly strangers to it; and by the different health and complexion which labour and due exercise create,



in comparison with that habit of body which we see consequent to an indulg'd state of indolence and rest. Nor is the lazy habit ruinous to the body only. The languishing disease corrupts all the enjoyments of a vigorous and healthy sense, and carries its infection into the mind; where it spreads a worse contagion. For however the body may hold out, 'tis impossible that the mind, in which the distemper is seated, can escape without an immediate affliction and disorder. The habit begets a tediousness and anxiety, which influences the whole temper, and converts the unnatural rest into an unhappy sort of activity, ill humour, and spleen. (*An Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit: Characteristicks*, vol. ii. p. 158. Printed in the year 1711, 3 vols. 8vo.)

JOSEPH ADDISON.

(Born 1672; died 1719.)

Our sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses. It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments. The sense of feeling can indeed give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours; but at the same time it is very much streightned and confined in its operations, to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects. Our sight seems designed to supply all these defects, and may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of touch, that spreads its

self over an infinite multitude of bodies, comprehends the largest figures, and brings into our reach some of the most remote parts of the universe.

It is this sense which furnishes the imagination with its ideas; so that by the pleasures of the imagination or fancy (which I shall use promiscuously) I here mean such as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in our view, or when we call up their ideas into our minds by paintings, statues, descriptions, or any the like occasion. We cannot indeed have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight; but we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images, which we have once received, into all the varieties of picture and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination; for by this faculty a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landships more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature. \* \* \*

A man of a polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures that the vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a statue. He meets with a secret refreshment in a description, and often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospect of fields and meadows, than another does in the possession. It gives him indeed a kind of property in every thing he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated parts of nature administer to his pleasures: so that he looks upon the world, as it were, in another light, and discovers in it a multitude of charms, that conceal themselves from the generality of mankind.

There are indeed but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal; every diversion they take is at the expence of some one virtue or another, and their very first step out of business is into vice or folly. A man should endeavour, therefore, to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety, and find in them such a satisfaction as a wise man would not blush to take. Of this nature are those of the imagination, which do not require such a bent of thought as is necessary to our more serious employments, nor at the same time suffer the mind to sink into that negligence and remissness, which are apt to accompany our more sensual delights, but, like a gentle exercise to the faculties, awaken them from sloth and idleness, without putting them upon any labour or difficulty. (The Spectator, No. 411, vol. vi. p. 83, edit. Lond. 1712-5, 8 vols. 8vo.)

SAMUEL CLARKE, D.D.

(Born 1675; died 1729.)

'Tis not therefore a right distinction, to define a miracle to be that which is against the course of nature; meaning, by the course of nature, the power of nature, or the natural powers of created agents. For, in this sense, 'tis no more against the course of nature, for an angel to keep a man from sinking in the water, than for a man to hold a stone from falling in the air, by over-powering the law of gravitation; and



yet the one is a miracle, the other not so. In like manner, 'tis no more above the natural power of a created intelligence, to stop the motion of the sun or of a planet, than to continue to carry it on in its usual course; and yet the former is a miracle, the latter not so. But if by the course of nature be meant only (as it truly signifies) the constant and uniform manner of God's acting either immediately or mediately in preserving and continuing the order of the world; then, in that sense, indeed a miracle may be rightly defined to be an effect produced contrary to the usual course or order of nature, by the unusual interposition of some intelligent being superiour to men; as I shall have occasion presently to observe more particularly.

And from this observation, we may easily discover the vanity and unreasonableness of that obstinate prejudice, which modern deists have universally taken up, against the belief of miracles in general. They see that things generally go on in a constant and regular method; that the frame and order of the world is preserved by things being disposed and managed in an uniform manner; that certain causes produce certain effects in a continued succession, according to certain fixed laws or rules; and from hence they conclude, very weakly and unphilosophically, that there are in matter certain laws or powers, the result of which is that which they call the course of nature; which they think is impossible to be changed or altered, and consequently that there can be no such thing as miracles. Whereas on the contrary, if they would consider things duly, they could not but see that dull and useless matter is



utterly incapable of obeying any laws, or of being endued with any powers; and that therefore that order and disposition of things, which they vulgarly call the course of nature, cannot possibly be any thing else but the arbitrary will and pleasure of God exerting it self and acting upon matter continually, either immediately by it self, or mediately by some subordinate intelligent agents, according to certain rules of uniformity and proportion, fixed indeed and constant, but which yet are made such merely by arbitrary constitution, not by any sort of necessity in the things themselves. (A Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, p. 222, 6th edit. Lond. 1724, 8vo.)

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

(Born 1678; died 1751.)

As he can never fill the character of a patriot king, tho his personal great and good qualities be in every other respect equal to it, who lies open to the flattery of courtiers, to the seduction of women, and to the partialities and affections which are easily contracted by too great indulgence in private life; so the prince who is desirous to establish this character, must observe such a decorum, and keep such a guard on himself, as may prevent even the suspicion of being liable to such influences. For as the reality would ruin, the very suspicion will lessen him in the opinion of mankind; and the opinion of mankind,

which is fame after death, is superior strength and power in life.

And now, if the principles and measures of conduct laid down in this discourse, as necessary to constitute that greatest and most glorious of human beings, a patriot king, be sufficient to this purpose, let us consider too how easy it is, or ought to be, to establish them in the minds of princes. They are founded on true propositions, all of which are obvious, nay, many of them self-evident. They are confirmed by universal experience. In a word, no understanding can resist them, and none but the weakest can fail, or be misled, in the application of them. To a prince whose heart is corrupt, it is in vain to speak, and for such a prince I would not be thought to write. But if the heart of a prince be not corrupt, these truths will find an easy ingression thro the understanding to it. Let us consider again, what the sure, the necessary effects of such principles and measures of conduct must be, to the prince, and to the people. On this subject let the imagination range thro the whole glorious scene of a patriot reign: the beauty of the idea will inspire those transports, which Plato imagined the vision of virtue would inspire, if virtue could be seen. What in truth can be so lovely, what so venerable, as to contemplate a king on whom the eyes of a whole people are fixed, filled with admiration, and glowing with affection; a king, in the temper of whose government, like that of Nerva, things so seldom allied as empire and liberty are intimately mixed, co-exist together inseparably, and constitute one real essence? What spectacle can be presented to the

view of the mind so rare, so nearly divine, as a king possessed of absolute power, neither usurped by fraud nor maintained by force, but the genuine effect of esteem, of confidence, and affection; the free gift of Liberty, who finds her greatest security in this power, and would desire no other if the prince on the throne could be, what his people wish him to be, immortal? - - - Concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land, joy sitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed; busy to improve their private property and the public stock; fleets covering the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of industry, carrying assistance or terror abroad by the direction of wisdom, and asserting triumphantly the right and the honour of Great Britain, as far as waters roll, and as winds can waft them. (Letters, on the Spirit of Patriotism, on the Idea of a Patriot King, and on the State of Parties at the Accession of King George the First, p. 222. Lond. 1749, 8vo.)

CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

(Born 1683; died 1750.)

But to speak my mind freely on the subject of consequences. I am not so scrupulous perhaps in my regard to them, as many of my profession are apt to be: my nature is frank and open, and warmly disposed, not onely to seek, but to speak, what I take to be true; which disposition has been greatly confirmed by the situation into which Providence has



thrown me. For I was never trained to pace in the trammels of the church, nor tempted by the sweets of it's preferments, to sacrifice the philosophic freedom of a studious, to the servile restraints of an ambitious life: and from this very circumstance, as often as I reflect upon it, I feel that comfort in my own breast, which no external honors can bestow. I persuade myself, that the life and faculties of man, at the best but short and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or laudably, than in the search of knowledge; and especially of that sort which relates to our duty and conduces to our happiness. In these inquiries therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me, I readily pursue, and endeavour to trace it to it's source, without any reserve or caution of pushing the discovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the discovery of any thing which is true, as a valuable acquisition to society, which cannot possibly hurt, or obstruct the good effect of any other truth whatsoever: for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other; and, like the drops of rain which fall separately into the river, mix themselves at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current. (A free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, from the earliest Ages through several successive Centuries, p. vi. 3d edit. Lond. 1749, 4to.)



## GEORGE BERKELEY, BISHOP OF CLOYNE.

(Born 1684; died 1753.)

As for the mixture of pain or uneasiness which is in the world, pursuant to the general laws of nature, and the actions of finite imperfect spirits; this, in the state we are in at present, is indispensibly necessary to our well-being. But our prospects are too narrow: we take, for instance, the idea of some one particular pain into our thoughts, and account it *evil*; whereas if we enlarge our view so as to comprehend the various ends, connexions, and dependencies of things, on what occasions and in what proportions we are affected with pain and pleasure, the nature of human freedom, and the design with which we are put into the world; we shall be forced to acknowledge that those particular things, which, considered in themselves appear to be *evil*, have the nature of *good*, when considered as linked with the whole system of beings.

From what hath been said it will be manifest to any considering person, that it is merely for want of attention and comprehensiveness of mind, that there are any favourers of atheism or the Manichean heresy to be found. Little and unreflecting souls may indeed burlesque the works of Providence, the beauty and order whereof they have not capacity, or will not be at the pains to comprehend. But those who are masters of any justness and extent of thought, and are withal used to reflect, can never sufficiently admire the divine traces of wisdom and goodness that shine through the oeconomy of nature. But

what truth is there which shineth so strongly on the mind, that by an aversion of thought, a wilful shutting of the eyes, we may not escape seeing it? Is it therefore to be wondered at, if the generality of men, who are ever intent on business or pleasure, and little used to fix or open the eye of their mind, should not have all that conviction and evidence of the being of God, which might be expected in reasonable creatures?

We should rather wonder that men can be found so stupid as to neglect, than that neglecting they should be unconvinced of such an evident and momentous truth. And yet it is to be feared that too many of parts and leisure, who live in Christian countries, are merely through a supine and dreadful negligence sunk into a sort of atheism; since it is downright impossible that a soul pierced and enlightened with a thorough sense of the omnipresence, holiness, and justice of that Almighty Spirit, should persist in a remorseless violation of his laws. We ought therefore earnestly to meditate and dwell on those important points, that so we may attain conviction without all scruple, "that the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good; that he is with us, and keepeth us in all places whither we go, and giveth us bread to eat, and raiment to put on;" that he is present and conscious to our innermost thoughts; and that we have a most absolute and immediate dependence on him. A clear view of which great truths cannot choose but fill our hearts with an awful circumspection and holy fear, which is the strongest incentive to virtue, and the best guard against vice. (A Treatise concerning the

Principles of Human Knowledge: Works, vol. i. p. 103. Lond. 1784, 2 vols. 4to.)

ALEXANDER POPE.

(Born 1688; died 1744.)

Homer is universally allowed to have had the greatest invention of any writer whatever. The praise of judgment Virgil has justly contested with him, and others may have their pretensions as to particular excellencies; but his invention remains yet unrivalled. Nor is it a wonder if he has ever been acknowledged the greatest of poets, who most excelled in that which is the very foundation of poetry. It is the invention that in different degrees distinguishes all great geniuses: the utmost stretch of human study, learning, and industry, which masters every thing besides, can never attain to this. It furnishes art with all her materials; and, without it, judgment itself can at best but steal wisely: for art is only like a prudent steward that lives on managing the riches of nature. Whatever praises may be given to works of judgment, there is not even a single beauty in them, to which the invention must not contribute: as in the most regular gardens, art can only reduce the beauties of nature to more regularity, and such a figure, which the common eye may better take in, and is therefore more entertained with. And perhaps the reason why common critics are inclined to prefer a judicious and methodical genius to a great and fruitful one, is, because they find it easier for themselves to pursue



their observations through an uniform and bounded walk of art, than to comprehend the vast and various extent of nature.

Our author's work is a wild paradise, where if we cannot see all the beauties so distinctly as in an ordered garden, it is only because the number of them is infinitely greater. 'Tis like a copious nursery which contains the seeds and first productions of every kind, out of which those who followed him have but selected some particular plants, each according to his fancy, to cultivate and beautify. If some things are too luxuriant, it is owing to the richness of the soil; and if others are not arrived to perfection or maturity, it is only because they are over-run and opprest by those of a stronger nature. (Preface to Homer's Iliad.)

JOSEPH BUTLER, LL. D. BISHOP OF DURHAM.

(Born 1692; died 1752.)

In this darkness, or this light of nature, call it which you please, revelation comes in; confirms every doubting fear, which could enter into the heart of man, concerning the future unprevented consequence of wickedness; supposes the world to be in a state of ruin (a supposition which seems the very ground of the Christian dispensation, and which, if not proveable by reason, yet it is in no wise contrary to it); teaches us, too, that the rules of divine government are such as not to admit of pardon immediately and directly upon repentance, or by the sole efficacy of it; but then teaches at the same time, what nature



might justly have hoped, that the moral government of the universe was not so rigid, but that there was room for an interposition, to avert the fatal consequences of vice; which, therefore, by this means, does admit of pardon. Revelation teaches us that the unknown laws of God's more general government, no less than the particular laws by which we experience he governs us at present, are compassionate, as well as good, in the more general notion of goodness; and that he hath mercifully provided that there should be an interposition to prevent the destruction of human kind, whatever that destruction unprevented would have been. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth," not, to be sure, in a speculative, but in a practical sense, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish;" gave his Son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow-creatures, when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies: in the same way of goodness, I say, though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God "loved us, and gave himself for us," with a love which he himself compares to that of human friendship; though, in this case, all comparisons must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them. He interposed in such a manner as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution upon sinners, which God had appointed should otherwise have been executed upon them; or, in such a manner as to prevent that punishment from actually following, which, according to the general laws of divine government, must have followed the

sins of the world, had it not been for such interposition. (The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature, part ii. chap. v. Works, vol. i. p. 252. Edinb. 1810, 2 vols. 8vo.)

FRANCIS HUTCHESON, LL. D.

(Born 1694; died 1747.)

Nothing will give us a juster idea of the wise order in which human nature is formed for universal love, and mutual good offices, than considering that strong attraction of benevolence, which we call gratitude. Every one knows that beneficence towards ourselves makes a much deeper impression upon us, and raises gratitude, or a stronger love towards the benefactor, than equal beneficence towards a third person. Now because of the great numbers of mankind, their distant habitations, and the incapacity of any one to be remarkably useful to great multitudes; that our benevolence might not be quite distracted with a multiplicity of objects, whose equal virtues would equally recommend them to our regard; or become useless, by being equally extended to multitudes, whose interest we could not understand, nor be capable of promoting, having no intercourse of offices with them; nature has so well ordered it, that as our attention is more raised by those good offices which are done to ourselves or our friends, so they cause a stronger sense of approbation in us, and produce a stronger benevolence toward the author of them. This we

call gratitude. And thus a foundation is laid for joyful associations in all kinds of business, and virtuous friendships.

By this constitution also the benefactor is more encouraged in his beneficence, and better secured of an increase of happiness by grateful returns, than if his virtue were only to be honoured by the colder general sentiments of persons unconcerned, who could not know his necessities, nor how to be profitable to him; especially, when they would all be equally determined to love innumerable multitudes, whose equal virtues would have the same pretensions to their love.

The universal benevolence towards all men, we may compare to that principle of gravitation, which perhaps extends to all bodies in the universe, but increases as the distance is diminished, and is strongest when bodies come to touch each other. Now this increase upon nearer approach, is as necessary as that there should be any attraction at all. For a general attraction, equal in all distances, would by the contrariety of such multitudes by equal forces, put an end to all regularity of motion, and perhaps stop it altogether. Beside this general attraction, the learned in these subjects shew us a great many other attractions among several sorts of bodys, answering to some particular sorts of passions, from some special causes. And that attraction or force by which the parts of each body cohere, may represent the self-love of each individual. (*An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, p. 202, 5th edit. Glasgow, 1772, 8vo.)



SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

(Born 1709; died 1784.)

That praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard, which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, by appealing wholly to observation



and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains and many rivers; so in the productions of genius, nothing can be stiled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty, must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been

most considered, and what is most considered is best understood. (Preface to Shakspeare.)

## JUNIUS.

Relinquishing, therefore, all idle views of amendment to your grace,\* or of benefit to the public, let me be permitted to consider your character and conduct merely as a subject of curious speculation. There is something in both which distinguishes you not only from all other ministers, but all other men. It is not that you do wrong by design, but that you should never do right by mistake. It is not that your indolence and your activity have been equally misapplied, but that the first uniform principle, or if I may call it the genius of your life, should have carried you through every possible change and contradiction of conduct, without the momentary imputation or colour of a virtue; and that the wildest spirit of inconsistency should never once have betrayed you into a wise or honourable action. This, I own, gives an air of singularity to your fortune, as well as to your disposition. Let us look back together to a scene in which a mind like yours will find nothing to repent of. Let us try, my lord, how well you have supported the various relations in which you stood, to your sovereign, your country, your friends, and yourself. Give us, if it be possible, some excuse to posterity, and to ourselves, for submitting to your administration. If not the abilities of a great minis-

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\* The late duke of Grafton.

ter, if not the integrity of a patriot, or the fidelity of a friend, shew us at least the firmness of a man. For the sake of your mistress, the lover shall be spared. I will not lead her into public, as you have done, nor will I insult the memory of departed beauty. Her sex, which alone made her amiable in your eyes, makes her respectable in mine.

The character of the reputed ancestors of some men, has made it possible for their descendants to be vicious in the extreme, without being degenerate. Those of your grace, for instance, left no distressing examples of virtue, even to their legitimate posterity; and you may look back with pleasure to an illustrious pedigree, in which heraldry has not left a single good quality upon record to insult or upbraid you. You have better proofs of your descent, my lord, than the register of a marriage, or any troublesome inheritance of reputation. There are some hereditary strokes of character, by which a family may be as clearly distinguished as by the blackest features of the human face. Charles the First lived and died a hypocrite. Charles the Second was a hypocrite of another sort, and should have died upon the same scaffold. At the distance of a century we see their different characters happily revived and blended in your grace. Sullen and severe without religion, profligate without gaiety, you live like Charles the Second, without being an amiable companion; and, for aught I know, may die as his father did, without the reputation of a martyr. (The Letters of Junius, vol. i. p. 75, edit. Lond. 1775, 2 vols. 8vo.)



## DAVID HUME.

(Born 1711 ; died 1776.)

The street before Whitehall was the place destined for the execution : for it was intended, by choosing that very place, in sight of his own palace, to display more evidently the triumph of popular justice over royal majesty. When the king came upon the scaffold, he found it so surrounded with soldiers, that he could not expect to be heard by any of the people : he addressed, therefore, his discourse to the few persons who were about him, particularly Colonel Tomlinson, to whose care he had lately been committed, and upon whom, as upon many others, his amiable deportment had wrought an entire conversion. He justified his own innocence in the late fatal wars, and observed that he had not taken arms till after the parliament had enlisted forces ; nor had he any other object in his warlike operations, than to preserve that authority entire, which his ancestors had transmitted to him. He threw not, however, the blame upon the parliament ; but was more inclined to think that ill instruments had interposed, and excited in them fears and jealousies with regard to his intentions. Tho' innocent towards his people, he acknowledged the equity of his execution in the eyes of his Maker ; and observed, that an unjust sentence, which he had suffered to take effect, was now punished by an unjust sentence upon himself. He forgave all his enemies, even the chief instruments of his death ; but exhorted them and the whole nation to



return to the ways of peace, by paying obedience to their lawful sovereign, his son and successor. - - - At one blow was his head severed from his body. A man in a vizor performed the office of executioner; another, in a like disguise, held up to the spectators the head streaming with blood, and cried aloud, *This is the head of a traitor.*

It is impossible to describe the grief, indignation, and astonishment, which took place not only among the spectators, who were overwhelmed with a flood of sorrow, but throughout the whole nation, so soon as the report of this fatal execution was conveyed to them. Never monarch, in the full triumph of success and victory, was more dear to his people, than his misfortunes and magnanimity, his patience and piety, had rendered this unhappy prince. In proportion to their former delusions, which had animated them against him, was the violence of their return to duty and affection; while each reproached himself, either with active disloyalty towards him, or with too indolent defence of his oppressed cause. On weaker minds, the effect of these complicated passions was prodigious. Women are said to have cast forth the untimely fruit of their womb: others fell into convulsions, or sunk into such a melancholy as attended them to their grave; nay, some, unmindful of themselves, as tho' they could not, or would not, survive their beloved prince, it is reported, suddenly fell down dead.\* The very pulpits were bedewed with unsuborned tears; those pulpits which had formerly thundered out the most violent impre-

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\* Οὐ τραγικὰ ἔτι ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ παρατράγωδα.

cations and anathemas against him. And all men united in their detestation of those hypocritical paricides, who, by sanctified pretences, had so long disguised their treasons, and in this last act of iniquity, had thrown an indelible stain upon the nation. (The History of England, vol. vii. p. 152, edit. Lond. 1770, 8 vols. 4to.)

SAMUEL OGDEN, D.D.

(Born 1716 ; died 1778.)

Amidst innumerable and undeniable marks of divine wisdom and goodness, we find in the world confusion, sin, and misery. Revelation informs us that it was not created in this disordered state; that a great change has taken place in it, occasioned by the fault of a human pair, it's first inhabitants; by which means their posterity are fallen into a worse condition than had been originally prepared for them by their gracious Creator. Death, which *God made not*, took possession of the world, and guilt and pain have a large dominion in it; and might have stretched their empire to a dreadful extent, had not a person of divine nature and attributes, united, in a manner incomprehensible, with the supreme Father of all things, been pleased, by the Father's appointment, and out of his own inconceivable goodness, to interpose in our behalf.

He came down from heaven; and still continuing to be one with the supreme nature, he assumed our's. He became man: he lived upon earth, did good, endured pain, preached piety and righteousness, worked

wonders, suffered death as a malefactor, restored himself to life, returned to heaven, and now governs his church by the operation of yet another divine person, who, with him and the Father, is one God, blessed for ever.

All this, you seem to say, is strange and wonderful. It is so. The divine existence, eternity, infinity, which yet reason obliges us to acknowledge, is very wonderful. The divine government of the world, which we experience, is in many instances exceedingly astonishing. The world is filled with wonders; and if you attempt ignorantly to remove them, they become greater. If you deny what is strange, you must admit what is impossible. (Sermons, vol. i. p. 145. Cambridge, 1780, 2 vols. 8vo.)

HUGH BLAIR, D.D.

(Born 1718; died 1800.)

We may easily be satisfied that applause will be often shared by the undeserving, if we allow ourselves to consider from whom it proceeds. When it is the approbation of the wise only and the good which is pursued, the love of praise may be then accounted to contain itself within just bounds, and to run in its proper channel. But the testimony of the discerning few, modest and unassuming as they commonly are, forms but a small part of the public voice. It seldom amounts to more than a whisper, which amidst the general clamour is drowned. When the love of praise has taken possession of the mind, it confines not itself to an object so limited. It grows



into an appetite for indiscriminate praise. And who are they that confer this praise? A mixed multitude of men, who in their whole conduct are guided by humour and caprice, far more than by reason; who admire false appearances, and pursue false gods; who inquire superficially, and judge rashly; whose sentiments are for the most part erroneous, always changeable, and often inconsistent. Nor let any one imagine, that by looking above the crowd, and courting the praise of the fashionable and the great, he makes sure of true honour. There are a great vulgar, as well as a small. Rank often makes no difference in the understandings of men, or in their judicious distribution of praise. Luxury, pride, and vanity have frequently as much influence in corrupting the sentiments of the great, as ignorance, bigotry, and prejudice have in misleading the opinions of the crowd.—And is it to such judges as these that you submit the supreme direction of your conduct? Do you stoop to court their favour as your chief distinction, when an object of so much juster and higher ambition is presented to you in *the praise of God*? God is the only unerring judge of what is excellent. His approbation alone is the substance, all other praise is but the shadow, of honour. The character which you bear in his sight, is your only real one. How contemptible does it render you, to be indifferent with respect to this, and to be solicitous about a name alone, a fictitious, imaginary character, which has no existence except in the opinions of a few weak and credulous men around you? They see no farther than the outside of things. They can judge of you by actions only; and not by the com-



prehensive view of all your actions, but by such merely as you have had opportunity of bringing forth to public notice. But the sovereign of the world beholds you in every light in which you can be placed. The silent virtues of a generous purpose, and a pious heart, attract his notice equally with the most splendid deeds. From him you may reap the praise of good actions which you had no opportunity of performing. For he sees them in their principle; he judges of you by your intentions; he knows what you would have done. You may be in his eyes a hero or a martyr, without undergoing the labours of the one, or the sufferings of the other. (Sermons, vol. ii. p. 147, edit. Lond. 1812. 5 vols. 8vo.)

TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M.D.

Born 1721; died 1771.

Genius in writing spontaneously arose, and, though neglected by the great, flourished under the culture of a public which had pretensions to taste, and piqued itself on encouraging literary merit. Swift and Pope we have mentioned on another occasion. Young still survived, a venerable monument of poetical talent. Thomson, the poet of the Seasons, displayed a luxuriance of genius in describing the beauties of nature. Akenside and Armstrong excelled in didactic poetry. Even the epopœa did not disdain an English dress, but appeared to advantage in the *Leonidas* of Glover, and the *Epigoniad* of Wilkie. The public acknowledged a considerable share of dramatic merit in the tragedies of Young, Mallet,

Home, and some other less distinguished authors. Very few regular comedies, during this period, were exhibited on the English theatre; which, however, produced many less laboured pieces, abounding with satire, wit, and humour. The *Careless Husband* of Cibber, and *Suspicious Husband* of Hoadley, are the only comedies of this age that bid fair for reaching posterity. The exhibitions of the stage were improved to the most exquisite entertainment by the talents and management of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and perhaps every other nation, in his genius for acting; in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magic of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude, and the whole pathos of expression. Quin excelled in dignity and declamation, as well as in exhibiting some characters of humour, equally exquisite and peculiar. Mrs. Cibber breathed the whole soul of female tenderness and passion; and Mrs. Pritchard displayed all the dignity of distress. That Great Britain was not barren of poets at this period, appears from the detached performances of Johnson, Mason, Gray, the two Whiteheads, and the two Wartons, besides a great number of other bards, who have sported in lyric poetry, and acquired the applause of their fellow-citizens. Candidates for literary fame appeared even in the higher sphere of life, embellished by the nervous stile, superior sense, and extensive erudition of a Corke; by the delicate taste, the polished muse, and tender feelings of a Lyttelton. King shone unrivalled in Roman eloquence. Even the female sex distinguished themselves by their taste and ingenuity. Miss Carter

rivalled the celebrated Dacier in learning and critical knowledge ; Mrs. Lennox signalized herself by many successful efforts of genius, both in poetry and prose ; and Miss Reid excelled the celebrated Rosalba in portrait painting, both in miniature and at large, in oil as well as in crayons. The genius of Cervantes was transfused into the novels of Fielding, who painted the characters, and ridiculed the follies of life, with equal strength, humour, and propriety. The field of history and biography was cultivated by many writers of ability ; among whom we distinguish the copious Guthrie, the circumstantial Ralph, the laborious Carte, the learned and elegant Robertson, and above all, the ingenious, penetrating, and comprehensive Hume, whom we rank among the first writers of the age, both as an historian and philosopher. Nor let us forget the merit conspicuous in the works of Campbell, remarkable for candour, intelligence, and precision. Johnson, inferior to none in philosophy, philology, poetry, and classical learning, stands foremost as an essayist, justly admired for the dignity, strength, and variety, of his stile, as well as for the agreeable manner in which he investigates the human heart, tracing every interesting emotion, and opening all the sources of morality. The laudable aim of inlisting the passions on the side of virtue, was successfully pursued by Richardson, in his *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Grandison* ; a species of writing equally new and extraordinary, where, mingled with much superfluity, we find a sublime system of ethics, an amazing knowledge and command of human nature. Many of the Greek and Roman classics made their appearance in English



translations, which were favourably received as works of merit: among these we place, after Pope's Homer, Virgil by Pitt and Warton, Horace by Francis, Polybius by Hampton, and Sophocles by Francklin. The war introduced a variety of military treatises, chiefly translated from the French language; and a free country, like Great Britain, will always abound with political tracts and lucubrations. Every literary production of merit, calculated for amusement or instruction, that appeared in any country or language of Christendom, was immediately imported, and naturalized among the English people.—Never was the pursuit after knowledge so universal, or literary merit more regarded, than at this juncture by the body of the British nation; but it was honoured by no attention from the throne, and little indulgence did it reap from the liberality of particular patrons. (Continuation of the complete History of England, vol. ii. p. 159. Lond. 1766, 2 vols. 4to.)

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D. D.

(Born 1721; died 1793.)

Zeal for what he regarded as truth, undaunted intrepidity to maintain it, abilities both natural and acquired to defend it, and unwearied industry to propagate it, are virtues which shine so conspicuously in every part of his behaviour, that even his enemies must allow him to have possessed them in an eminent degree. To these may be added with equal justice, such purity and even austerity of manners, as became one who assumed the character of a re-



former; such sanctity of life as suited the doctrine which he delivered; and such perfect disinterestedness as affords no slight presumption of his sincerity. Superior to all selfish considerations, a stranger to the elegancies of life, and despising its pleasures, he left the honours and emoluments of the church to his disciples, remaining satisfied himself in his original state of professor in the university, and pastor of the town of Wittemberg, with the moderate appointments annexed to these offices. His extraordinary qualities were alloyed with no inconsiderable mixture of human frailty and human passions. These, however, were of such a nature, that they cannot be imputed to malevolence or corruption of heart, but seem to have taken their rise from the same source with many of his virtues. His mind, forcible and vehement in all its operations, roused by great objects, or agitated by violent passions, broke out, on many occasions, with an impetuosity which astonished men of feebler spirits, or such as are placed in a more tranquil situation. By carrying some praise-worthy dispositions to excess, he bordered sometimes on what was culpable, and was often betrayed into actions which exposed him to censure. His confidence that his own opinions were well founded, approached to arrogance; his courage in asserting them, to rashness; his firmness in adhering to them, to obstinacy; and his zeal in confuting his adversaries, to rage and scurrility. Accustomed himself to consider every thing as subordinate to truth, he expected the same deference for it from other men; and without making any allowances for their timidity or prejudices, he poured forth, against

those who disappointed him in this particular, a torrent of invective mingled with contempt. Regardless of any distinction of rank or character when his doctrines were attacked, he chastised all his adversaries, indiscriminately, with the same rough hand; neither the royal dignity of Henry VIII. nor the eminent learning and abilities of Erasmus, screened them from the same gross abuse with which he treated Tetzel or Eccius.

But these indecencies, of which Luther was guilty, must not be imputed wholly to the violence of his temper. They ought to be charged in part on the manners of the age. Among a rude people, unacquainted with those maxims which, by putting continual restraint on the passions of individuals, have polished society and rendered it agreeable, disputes of every kind were managed with heat, and strong emotions were uttered in their natural language, without reserve or delicacy. At the same time, the works of learned men were all composed in Latin, and they were not only authorized, by the example of eminent writers in that language, to use their antagonists with the most illiberal scurrility; but, in a dead tongue, indecencies of every kind appear less shocking than in a living language, whose idioms and phrases seem gross, because they are familiar. (*The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V.* vol. iii. p. 65. Lond. 1769, 3 vols. 4to.)

THOMAS LELAND, D.D.

(Born 1722; died 1785.)

Thus died Philip king of Macedon, at the age of forty-seven years, and after a reign of twenty-four, spent in toils and difficulties, and enterprises of hazard and danger, in which he so eminently displayed that extent and elevation of genius; that firmness and greatness of mind; that justness and accuracy, penetration and sagacity, in forming his designs; that true discernment in chusing the means of conducting them; and that vigour and resolution in executing them; which have justly rendered him the object of admiration to all those who are acquainted with the Grecian story. The judicious reader cannot fail to have already observed, how far he was assisted in the acquisition of that power to which he aspired, and which was purchased by the labours and dangers of his life, by the advantages which he happily derived from the distresses of his infant years, from his education, from his natural and acquired accomplishments, and from the dispositions and circumstances of those with whom he contended. He may also have already observed, how far the different, and apparently inconsistent descriptions, which historians have transmitted of this prince's character, may be reconciled by attending to that great ruling passion, the love of glory and power, which possessed the mind of Philip. All his other passions, his inclinations, his natural endowments, the principles in which he had been instructed, the sentiments



he had imbibed, the graces, the qualifications, the accomplishments, he had acquired, were all subservient to this. If terror and severity were necessary for the establishment of his power, his sentiments of humanity easily yielded to the dictates of his ambition; and the distresses in which whole states and countries were involved, he regarded with indifference and unconcern. If dissimulation and artifice were required, his perfect knowledge of mankind, joined to his obliging and insinuating deportment, enabled him to practise these with the most consummate address; and thus were candour and ingenuousness frequently sacrificed to his schemes of greatness. If corruption was necessary, he knew its power, and was perfect in the art of propagating and recommending it by the fairest and most plausible pretences; and although he endeavoured, from a full conviction of its fatal consequences, to check its progress in his own kingdom, (as appears from his discouraging his son's attempts to introduce it), yet he never scrupled to make it his instrument to destroy his rivals. Hence we find him sometimes represented as a cruel, crafty, and perfidious prince, who laid it down as his favourite maxim, that it was a folly, when he had killed the father, to leave any of his family alive to revenge his death; who professed to amuse men with oaths, as children are cheated with toys; and who was rather the purchaser, than the conqueror of Greece. If, on the other hand, the specious appearances of generosity, condescension, and benevolence, were required to serve his great purposes, no man was more capable of assuming them; no man could display them more naturally and grace-



fully. If his reputation was to be exalted, or the number of his partizans to be increased, he could confer favours with an air of the utmost cordiality and affection, he could listen to reproof with patience, and acknowledge his errors with the most specious semblance of humility: he could conquer his enemies and revilers by his good offices, and reconcile their affections by unexpected and unmerited liberalities. Hence again we find him imblazoned by all the pomp of praise; as humane and benevolent, merciful and placable; in the midst of all the insolence of victory, careful to exercise the virtues of humanity; and gaining a second and more glorious triumph, by the kindness and clemency with which he reconciled and commanded the affections of those whom his arms had subdued. (The History of the Life and Reign of Philip King of Macedon, the Father of Alexander, vol. ii. p. 306. Lond. 1758, 2 vols. 4to.)

ADAM SMITH, LL. D.

(Born 1723; died 1790.)

This universal benevolence, how noble and generous soever, can be the source of no solid happiness to any man who is not thoroughly convinced that all the inhabitants of the universe, the meanest as well as the greatest, are under the immediate care and protection of that great, benevolent, and all-wise Being, who directs all the movements of nature; and who is determined, by his own unalterable perfections, to maintain in it, at all times, the greatest

possible quantity of happiness. To this universal benevolence, on the contrary, the very suspicion of a fatherless world, must be the most melancholy of all reflections; from the thought that all the unknown regions of infinite and incomprehensible space may be filled with nothing but endless misery and wretchedness. All the splendour of the highest prosperity can never enlighten the gloom with which so dreadful an idea must necessarily overshadow the imagination; nor, in a wise and virtuous man, can all the sorrow of the most afflicted adversity ever dry up the joy which necessarily springs from the habitual and thorough conviction of the truth of the contrary system.

The wise and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest of his own particular order or society. He is at all times willing, too, that the interest of this order or society should be sacrificed to the greater interest of the state or sovereignty, of which it is only a subordinate part. He should therefore be equally willing that all those inferior interests should be sacrificed to the greater interest of the universe, to the interest of that great society of all sensible and intelligent beings, of which God himself is the immediate administrator and director. If he is deeply impressed with the habitual and thorough conviction, that this benevolent and all-wise Being can admit into the system of his government no partial evil which is not necessary for the universal good, he must consider all the misfortunes which may befall himself, his friends, his society, or his country, as necessary for the prosperity of the universe, and

therefore as what he ought not only to submit to with resignation, but as what he himself, if he had known all the connexions and dependencies of things, ought sincerely and devotedly to have wished for. (*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, part vi. sect. ii. *Works*, vol. i. p. 413. Lond. 1812, 5 vols. 8vo.)

ADAM FERGUSON, LL.D.

(Born 1724; died 1816.)

The genius of political wisdom and civil arts appears to have chosen his seats in particular tracts of the earth, and to have selected his favourites in particular races of men. Man, in his animal capacity, is qualified to subsist in every climate. He reigns with the lion and the tyger under the equatorial heats of the sun, or he associates with the bear and the rain-deer beyond the polar circle. His versatile disposition fits him to assume the habits of either condition, or his talent for arts enables him to supply its defects. The intermediate climates, however, appear most to favour his nature; and in whatever manner we account for the fact, it cannot be doubted that this animal has always attained to the principal honours of his species within the temperate zone. The arts, which he has on this scene repeatedly invented, the extent of his reason, the fertility of his fancy, and the force of his genius in literature, commerce, policy, and war, sufficiently declare either a distinguished advantage of situation, or a natural superiority of mind.

The most remarkable races of men, it is true, have



been rude before they were polished. They have in some cases returned to rudeness again: and it is not from the actual possession of arts, science, or policy, that we are to pronounce of their genius.

There is a vigour, a reach of capacity, and a sensibility of mind, which may characterise as well the savage as the citizen, the slave as well as the master; and the same powers of the mind may be turned to a variety of purposes. A modern Greek, perhaps, is mischievous, slavish, and cunning, from the same animated temperament that made his ancestor ardent, ingenious, and bold, in the camp, or in the council of his nation. A modern Italian is distinguished by sensibility, quickness, and art, while he employs on trifles the capacity of an ancient Roman; and exhibits now, in the scene of amusement, and in the search of a frivolous applause, that fire, and those passions, with which Gracchus burned in the forum, and shook the assemblies of a severer people. (*An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, p. 165. Edinb. 1767, 4to.)

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M. B.

(Born 1728; died 1774.)

Examine a savage in the history of his country and predecessors; you ever find his warriors able to conquer armies, and his sages acquainted with more than possible knowledge: human nature is to him an unknown country; he thinks it capable of great things, because he is ignorant of its boundaries; whatever can be conceived to be done, he allows to



be possible, and whatever is possible, he conjectures must have been done. He never measures the actions and powers of others, by what himself is able to perform, nor makes a proper estimate of the greatness of his fellows, by bringing it to the standard of his own incapacity. He is satisfied to be one of a country where mighty things have been; and imagines the fancied power of others reflects a lustre on himself. Thus, by degrees, he loses the idea of his own insignificance, in a confused notion of the extraordinary powers of humanity, and is willing to grant extraordinary gifts to every pretender, because unacquainted with their claims.

This is the reason why demi-gods and heroes have ever been erected in times or countries of ignorance and barbarity; they addressed a people who had high opinions of human nature, because they were ignorant how far it could extend; they addressed a people who were willing to allow that men should be gods, because they were yet imperfectly acquainted with God and with man. These impostors knew that all men are naturally fond of seeing something very great, made from the little materials of humanity; that ignorant nations are not more proud of building a tower to reach heaven, or a pyramid to last for ages, than of raising up a demi-god of their own country and creation. The same pride that erects a colossus or a pyramid, instals a god or an hero: but though the adoring savage can raise his colossus to the clouds, he can exalt the hero not one inch above the standard of humanity; incapable therefore of exalting the idol, he debases himself and falls prostrate before him. (Letters from a Citizen

of the World to his Friends in the East, lett. cxiv. Miscellaneous Works, vol. iii. p. 444. Lond. 1801, 4 vols. 8vo.)

THOMAS WARTON, B. D.

(Born 1728; died 1790.)

When the corruptions and impostures of popery were abolished, the fashion of cultivating the Greek and Roman learning became universal; and the literary character was no longer appropriated to scholars by profession, but assumed by the nobility and gentry. The ecclesiastics had found it their interest to keep the languages of antiquity to themselves, and men were eager to know what had been so long injuriously concealed. Truth propagates truth, and the mantle of mystery was removed not only from religion but from literature. The laity, who had now been taught to assert their natural privileges, became impatient of the old monopoly of knowledge, and demanded admittance to the usurpations of the clergy. The general curiosity for new discoveries, heightened either by just or imaginary ideas of the treasures contained in the Greek and Roman writers, excited all persons of leisure and fortune to study the classics. The pedantry of the present age was the politeness of the last. An accurate comprehension of the phraseology and peculiarities of the antient poets, historians, and orators, which yet seldom went further than a kind of technical erudition, was an indispensable and almost the principal object in the circle of a gentleman's education. Every

young lady of fashion was carefully instituted in classical letters; and the daughter of a duchess was taught, not only to distil strong waters, but to construe Greek. Among the learned females of high distinction, Queen Elizabeth herself was the most conspicuous. Roger Ascham, her preceptor, speaks with rapture of her astonishing progress in the Greek nouns; and declares with no small degree of triumph, that during a long residence at Windsor-castle, she was accustomed to read more Greek in a day, than "some prebendary of that church did Latin, in one week." And although perhaps a princess looking out words in a lexicon, and writing down hard phrases from Plutarch's Lives, may be thought at present a more incompatible and extraordinary character, than a canon of Windsor understanding no Greek and but little Latin, yet Elizabeth's passion for these acquisitions was then natural, and resulted from the genius and habitudes of her age. (The History of English Poetry, vol. iv. p. 322, edit. Lond. 1824, 4 vols. 8vo.)

EDMUND BURKE.

(Born 1730; died 1797.)

By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit, our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are handed down to us and from us, in the same course and order. Our



political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner, and on those principles, to our forefathers, we are guided, not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars. (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 48, 2d edit. Lond. 1790, 8vo.)

JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D.

(Born 1735; died 1803.)

Let those who wish to preserve their imagination in a cheerful and healthy state, cultivate piety, and



guard against superstition, by forming right notions of God's adorable being and providence, and cherishing the correspondent affections of love, veneration, and gratitude. Superstition is fierce and gloomy; but true Christianity gives glory to the divine nature, and is most comfortable to the human. It teaches that nothing happens but by the permission of him who is greatest, wisest, and best; that the adversities which befall us may all be improved into blessings; that man is indeed a sinful creature, but that God has graciously provided for him the means both of pardon and of happiness; that, if we obey the Gospel, than which no system of doctrine can be more excellent in itself, or supported by better evidence, "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us an eternal weight of glory;" for that when these transitory scenes disappear, an endless state of things will commence, wherein virtue shall triumph, and all her tears be wiped away for ever; wherein there will be as much felicity as the most exalted benevolence can desire, and no more punishment than the most perfect justice will approve.—He who believes all this, and endeavours to act accordingly, must look upon the calamities of life as not very material; and, while he retains the command of his faculties, may have continually present to his imagination the most sublime, and most transporting views, that it is possible for a human being either to wish for, or to comprehend.

The divine omnipotence ought at all times to inspire us with veneration and holy fear. By the simplest means, or without any means, it can accomplish the most important purposes. This very

faculty of imagination, the Deity can make, to each of us, even in this world, the instrument of exquisite happiness, or consummate misery, by setting before it the most glorious objects of hope, or the most tremendous images of despair. What a blessing are chearful thoughts, and a sound imagination! and what man can say that his imagination and thoughts are always, or indeed at any time, in his own power? Let us therefore learn humility; and seek the divine favour above all things. And while we endeavour to make a right use of the rules he has prescribed, or given us grace to discover, for purifying and improving our nature, let us look up for aid to him, whose influence alone can render them successful. (*Dissertations Moral and Critical*, p. 205. Lond. 1783, 4to.)

EDWARD GIBBON.

(Born 1737; died 1794.)

The discoveries of ancient and modern navigators, and the domestic history or tradition of the most enlightened nations, represent the *human savage* naked both in mind and body, and destitute of laws, of arts, of ideas, and almost of language. From this abject condition, perhaps the primitive and universal state of man, he has gradually arisen to command the animals, to fertilise the earth, to traverse the ocean, and to measure the heavens. His progress in the improvement and exercise of his mental and corporeal faculties has been irregular and various; infinitely slow in the beginning, and increasing by

degrees with redoubled velocity: ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall; and the several climates of the globe have felt the vicissitudes of light and darkness. Yet the experience of four thousand years should enlarge our hopes, and diminish our apprehensions: we cannot determine to what height the human species may aspire in their advances towards perfection; but it may safely be presumed that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism. The improvements of society may be viewed under a threefold aspect. 1. The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a *single* mind; but these superior powers of reason or fancy are rare and spontaneous productions; and the genius of Homer, or Cicero, or Newton, would excite less admiration, if they could be created by the will of a prince, or the lessons of a preceptor. 2. The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences, are more solid and permanent; and *many* individuals may be qualified, by education and discipline, to promote, in their respective stations, the interest of the community. But this general order is the effect of skill and labour; and the complex machinery may be decayed by time, or injured by violence. 3. Fortunately for mankind, the more useful, or at least, more necessary arts, can be performed without superior talents, or national subordination; without the powers of *one*, or the union of *many*. Each village, each family, each individual, must always possess both ability and inclination, to perpetuate the use of fire and of metals; the propa-



gation and service of domestic animals; the methods of hunting and fishing; the rudiments of navigation; the imperfect cultivation of corn, or other nutritive grain; and the simple practice of the mechanic trades. Private genius and public industry may be extirpated; but these hardy plants survive the tempest, and strike an everlasting root into the most unfavourable soil. The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance; and the barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome. But the scythe, the invention or emblem of Saturn, still continued annually to mow the harvests of Italy; and the human feasts of the Læstrigons have never been renewed on the coast of Campania.

Since the first discovery of the arts, war, commerce, and religious zeal have diffused, among the savages of the Old and New World, these inestimable gifts: they have been successively propagated; they can never be lost. We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion, that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race. (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. iii. p. 638, edit. Lond. 1781-8, 6 vols. 4to.)

GILBERT STUART, LL. D.

(Born 1742; died 1786.)

Thus war, gallantry, and devotion, conspired to form the character of the knight. And these man-



ners, so lofty and so romantic, were for ages to give a splendour to Europe, by directing the fortunes of its nations, and by producing examples of magnanimity and valour, which are unequalled in the annals of mankind. But their effects in policy and war, however conspicuous, are of little consideration, when compared with the permanent tone they communicated to society. The spirit of humanity, which distinguishes modern times in the periods of war, as well as of peace; the gallantry which prevails in our conversations and private intercourse, on our theatres, and in our public assemblies and amusements; the point of honour, which corrects the violence of the passions, by improving our delicacy, and the sense of propriety and decorum, and which, by teaching us to consider the importance of others, makes us value our own; these circumstances arose out of chivalry, and discriminate the modern from the antient world.

The knight, while he acquired in the company of the ladies, the graces of external behaviour, improved his natural sensibility and tenderness. He smoothed over the roughness of war with politeness. To be rude to a lady, or to speak to her disadvantage, was a crime which could not be pardoned. He guarded her possessions from the rapacious, and maintained her reputation against slander. The uncourteous offender was driven from the society of the valiant; and the interposition of the fair was often necessary to protect him from death. But the courtesy of the knight, though due in a peculiar manner to the female sex, extended itself to all the business and intercourse of civil life. He studied a habitual elegance of manners. Politeness became a knightly virtue; it even

attended him to the field of battle, and checked his passions in the ardour of victory. The generosity and the delicate attentions he showed to the enemy he had vanquished, are a satire on the warriors of antiquity. His triumphs were disgraced by no indecent joy, no brutal ferocity. Courteous and generous in the general strain of his conduct, refined to extravagance in his gallantry to the ladies, and the declared protector of religion and innocence, he was himself to be free from every stain. His rank, his duties, and his cares, made him aim at the perfection of virtue. (*A View of Society in Europe, in its Progress from Rudeness to Refinement, p. 66. Edinb. 1778, 4to.*)

SAMUEL PARR, LL. D.

(Born 1747; died 1825.)

If suspending, for the present, our examination of the spirit which pervades your writings, we proceed to consider their pretensions as compositions, wide is the difference that appears between them, both in their excellencies and in their faults.—He blundered against grammar, and you\* refined against idiom. He, from defect of taste, contaminated English by Gallicism, and you, from excess of affectation, sometimes disgraced what would have risen to ornamental and dignified writing, by a profuse mixture of vulgar or antiquated phraseology. He soared into sublimity

\* Dr. Hurd, the late bishop of Worcester.

without effort, and you, *by* effort, sunk into a kind of familiarity, which, without leading to perspicuity, borders upon meanness. He was great by the energies of nature, and you were little by the misapplication of art. He, to shew his strength, piled up huge and rugged masses of learning, and you, to shew your skill, split and shivered them into what your brother critic calls *ψήγματα καὶ ἀραιώματα*. He sometimes reached the force of Longinus, but without his elegance, and you exhibited the intricacies of Aristotle, but without his exactness.

The language of Warburton is, I believe, generally allowed to be abrupt, inartificial, and undisciplined; irregular as the mind of the writer, and tinged with many diversified hues from the rapid and uncertain course of his extensive and miscellaneous reading. As to your lordship, whatever likeness some prying and morose observers may have traced between you and Vertumnus in the versatility of your principles, the comparison must not be extended to the features of your style, concerning which, if we should grant the *mille ornatus* to belong to it, we cannot add, without the grossest hypocrisy, or the most vitiated taste, *mille decenter habet*. Let me however commend both you and the bishop of Gloucester where commendation is due; and let me bestow it, not with the thrifty and penurious measure of a critic by profession, nor yet with the coldness and languor of an envious antagonist, but with the ardent gratitude of a man, whom, after many a painful feeling of weariness and disgust, you have refreshed unexpectedly, and whom, as if by some secret touch of magic, you have charmed and overpowered with the most exqui-



site sense of delight. Yes, my lord, in a few lucky and lucid intervals between the paroxysms of your polemical frenzy, all the laughable and all the loathsome singularities which floated upon the surface of your diction, have in a moment vanished, while, in their stead, beauties equally striking from their suddenness, their originality, and their splendour, have burst in a "flood of glory" upon the astonished and enraptured reader. Often has my mind hung with fondness and with admiration over the crowded, yet clear and luminous galaxies of imagery diffused through the works of Bp. Taylor, the mild and unsullied lustre of Addison, the variegated and expanded eloquence of Burke, the exuberance and dignified ease of Middleton, the gorgeous declamation of Bolingbroke, and the majestic energy of Johnson. But if I were to do justice, my lord, to the more excellent parts of your own writings and of Warburton's, I should say that the English language, even in its widest extent, cannot furnish passages more strongly marked, either by grandeur in the thought, by felicity in the expression, by phrases varied and harmonious, or by full and sonorous periods. (Tracts by Warburton, and a Warburtonian, not admitted into the Collection of their respective Works, p. 149. Lond. 1789, 8vo.)

JOHN LOGAN.

(Born 1748; died 1788.)

There is a second cause which has often been known to make men associate with the profane, and



that is, an opinion that wickedness, particularly some kinds of it, are manly and becoming; that dissoluteness, infidelity, and blasphemy, are indications of a sprightly and a strong mind. By the most unhappy of all associations, they join together the ideas of religion and dullness; and if they have a good opinion of a man's faith and his morals, they are led to have a very bad one of his understanding. This opinion, although it has gained ground where it might not have been expected, is without foundation in nature or in fact. Some instances there may have been of great men who have been irregular; but the experience of ages is on the other side. Those who have shone in all ages as the lights of the world; the most celebrated names that are recorded in the annals of fame; legislators, the founders of states, and the fathers of their country, on whom succeeding ages have looked back with filial reverence; patriots, the guardians of the laws, who have stemmed the torrent of corruption in every age; heroes, the saviours of their country, who have returned victorious from the field of battle, or, more than victorious, who have died for their country; philosophers, who have opened the book of nature, and explained the wonders of almighty power; bards, who have sung the praises of virtue and of virtuous men, whose strains carry them down to immortality; with a few exceptions, have been uniformly on the side of goodness, and have been as distinguished in the temple of virtue as they were illustrious in the temple of fame. It was one of the maxims which governed their lives, that there is nothing in nature which can compensate wickedness; that although the rewards and punishments, which

influence illiberal and ungenerous minds, were set aside; that although the thunders of the Almighty were hushed, and the gates of Paradise were open no more, they would follow religion and virtue for their own sake, and co-operate with eternal Providence in perpetual endeavours to favour the good, to depress the bad, and to promote the happiness of the whole creation. (Sermons, vol. ii. p. 6. edit. Edinb. 1819, 2 vols. 8vo.)

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

(Born 1748; died 1806.)

Whatever might be the language of flatterers, and how loud soever the cry of a triumphant but deluded party, there were not wanting men of nobler sentiments and of more rational views. Minds once thoroughly imbued with the love of what Sidney, in his last moments, so emphatically called the good old cause, will not easily relinquish their principles; nor was the manner in which absolute power was exercised, such as to reconcile to it, in practice, those who had always been averse to it in speculation. The hatred of tyranny must, in such persons, have been exasperated by the experience of its effects, and their attachment to liberty proportionably confirmed. To them the state of their country must have been intolerable: to reflect upon the efforts of their fathers, once their pride and glory, and whom they themselves had followed with no unequal steps, and to see the result of all in the scenes that now presented them-

selves, must have filled their minds with sensations of the deepest regret, and feelings bordering at least on despondency. To us, who have the opportunity of combining, in our view of this period, not only the preceding but subsequent transactions, the consideration of it may suggest reflections far different, and speculations more consolatory. Indeed I know not that history can furnish a more forcible lesson against despondency, than by recording, that within a short time from those dismal days in which men of the greatest constancy despaired, and had reason to do so, within five years from the death of Sidney, arose the brightest æra of freedom known to the annals of our country. (A History of the early Part of the Reign of James the Second, p. 57. Lond. 1808, 4to.)



















